

Disability Now

Play scheme
at long-stay
hospital p.5

Gardening 1984:
news, information,
equipment p.8-9

Local Authority sets up own professional workshop

A pioneering scheme that brings together disabled people and microcomputers and holds out the possibility of jobs is now under way in South London. Southwark Micro-aid is the first professional workshop for disabled people to be established by a local authority.

Initially the project is for 12 unemployed disabled people aged 16 to 65 who live in Southwark, but it is hoped that when they have completed their training they will pass on their skills to others and so increase the number.

So far 7 physically disabled men and women from the Aylesbury Day Centre have moved into a large, specially designed room where they are learning to use BBC microcomputers and Apricot business machines.

Ultimately it is hoped that Southwark Micro-aid will become a work training centre and an experimental resource for disabled people all over the country.

The idea of work training in Southwark came two years ago from Liz Mitchelmore-Hawkins, head of Good Neighbours House, the centre sponsored by The Stars Organisation for Spastics.

ities are not used to looking beyond Urban Aid and the DHSS," she says. "Joint funding takes a lot of time and hassle."

Some of the disabled people on the project are more interested in the computer as a tool for communication and will only be working part-time. But others hope it will lead to a job.

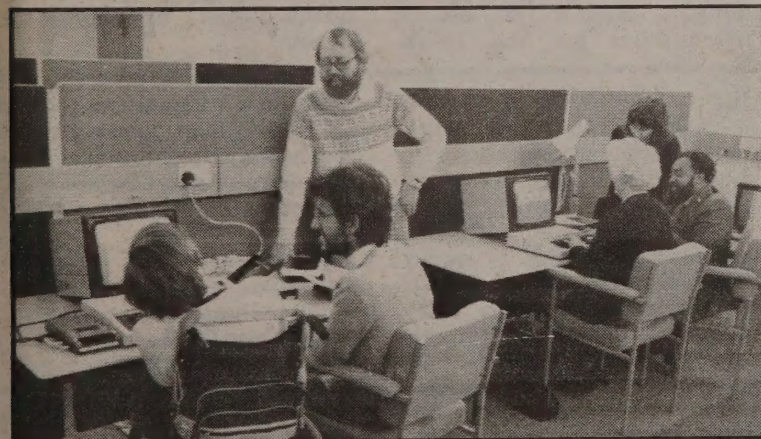
Patrick Adams, Co-ordinator of Southwark Micro-aid, is in touch with local resettlement officers and the MSC, and he aims to link up with local employers by tendering for small work to show what the project can do. Voluntary organisations are another source of work.

Patrick would like to build up a co-operative on the premises.

"Many disabled people feel they don't stand a chance out-



Debbie Brenner



Concentrating bard - students and staff at Southwark Micro-aid, watched by Patrick Adams and Debbie Brenner.

Mike Holmes, now Employment and Leisure Services Manager for The Spastics Society, was involved in the early stages.

But the enduring force behind the project has been Debbie Brenner, Development Officer at Southwark Social Services.

She changed the specification from making wooden toys to micro-technology and made contact with people all over the country.

"There is a lot of knowledge around," she says, but not a lot of co-ordination."

Funding has come from the Department of the Environment (Urban Aid), the Department of Trade and Industry, the European Social Fund and the London Borough of Southwark. Altogether she has raised £64,000 capital, and £74,000 revenue over 3 or 5 years, much of it by "happy accidents" or "because money attracts money."

"No body of knowledge exists about funding, and local author-

side," he says. "But if they could work within the bounds of a co-operative, they would jump at the opportunity."

If one local authority can create opportunities, why not others?

"I wanted to see it happen, and it did," said Debbie Brenner.

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Community helper, Diana Pollard, is off to the youth club with Martin (left) and Mark Payne.

Community care in Plymouth

Under a community care scheme launched last month, relatives of mentally and physically disabled people living in Plymouth may now obtain part-time help in the home from paid community helpers.

The Plymouth Care Scheme is the first of its kind to be sponsored by The Spastics Society. It has received £45,000 for one year under the Manpower Services Commission Community Programme.

10 men and women of different ages and previously unemployed, plus a co-ordinator, will be supplying a much needed service. Already 50 families are on the books and others are being referred daily.

"For two hours or so during the day or in the evening, they will relieve relatives and give practical help to disabled people - dressing them, giving them a cup of coffee, taking them shopping or to the pub," said Nick Clarke, The Society's County Organiser for Plymouth and Cornwall.

"They are not there to do nursing or home help, but to supplement the current services," he added.

All the community helpers received a week of initial training. After that it was on the job training. As Nick Clarke said, "Who knows more about their disability than the disabled person?"

For 4 years he and his management team have been working to get the service going. Now he hopes it can be expanded outside Plymouth and offer longer hours of help, even holiday respite care.

But this will depend on whether an application for Urban Aid is successful, and Urban Aid requires the local authority to provide 25 per cent of the funding.

Peter Thistlewaite, Area Director of Social Services for West Devon, has supported the scheme so far. "It is a very valuable supplement to the home care service we operate," he said.

"If the scheme is successful we shall look positively at means of

giving financial support in the future."

He is meeting John Roberts, Senior Regional Officer for the West Region, and Nick Clarke later this month.

Alec Payne, who has two mentally handicapped sons, agrees that there is a gap in the existing services.

"When we came here 7 years ago we found the facilities lacking compared to other parts of the country," he said.

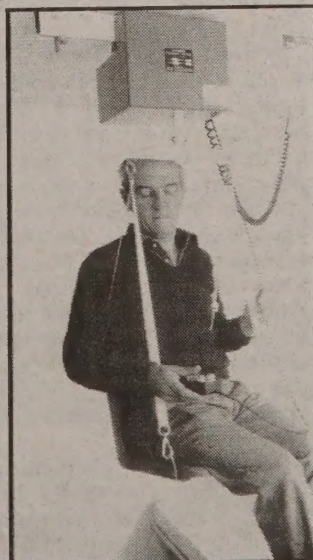
"This is a very worthwhile scheme - provided it's not a flash in the pan. But it's a shame that The Spastics Society has had to come up with it and that the Social Services didn't come up with something similar a long time ago."

"I hope enough people are interested so that pressure will be put on the Authority to keep it going."



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Letters to the Editor

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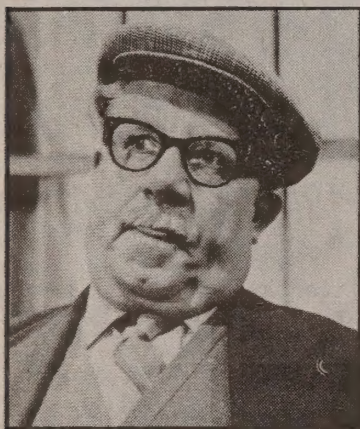
Thank you, from Ivancica

Let me take this occasion to express deep thanks for the nice article upon my doctorate in the March issue of *Disability Now*.

I got the newspaper a few days before the formal presentation of my degree so I was able to show the article to my co-workers and friends at the cocktail party after the ceremony.

We recalled all those who have helped me so much with the dissertation, whether in my country or abroad. The English people were mentioned with particular pleasure.

So please convey my thanks to all members of The Spastics Society who have participated in the research, either through giving advice and information, collecting literature, exchanging experiences, or through moral support.



Jack Howarth

When Jack died at the end of March, the Stars Organisation for Spastics lost a great and valued friend - and so did I.

Apart from his work in the theatre, in television and radio, Jack was a tireless worker for charity and in particular SOS.

He joined the SOS in 1962 and from then on he and Betty, together always, put their heart and soul into raising money for the charity.

They attended as many fund raising occasions as their *Coronation Street* schedule permitted. They travelled many hundreds of miles by train - neither of them drove. All their spare time was given to the SOS. Their energy was staggering, their support unswerving, and frankly, it was just plain nice to have them with us.

He was known to persuade Betty to shorten a holiday or change a date because there had been a call to raise money for SOS.

A few years ago, Jack pioneered the SOS collections at Pontins camps during the summer months. His tiny autograph cards were familiar all over the British Isles and he raised personally over £50,000 for the SOS.

I am delighted that Betty is going to continue to give the SOS that special "Howarth" support.

Jack was a very loyal friend of mine and this is my personal tribute to him. However, I have been asked by the residents of our Centres, the members of the SOS and my staff to add their love and admiration.

Our thoughts are that the SOS was damn lucky to have Jack as a Vice President. I just hope they haven't broken the mould.

Sheila Rawstone

I shall be keeping in touch with The Society.

I hope to see some of you at the International Cerebral Palsy Society Conference at the Lake of Bled in September. Welcome! **Ivancica Planinc**, 41000 Zagreb, Kupska 62a, Yugoslavia.

It's an inappropriate name

At the recent Executive Committee Meeting, my members expressed some concern at the new title which has been given to *Spastics News*.

It had been understood from a previous publication that your management had decided to leave the title as it was despite running a fairly major competition last year inviting people to suggest new names.

I have been asked to write to you to ascertain on what basis you have arrived at this new name and whether or not you are prepared to receive suggestions for a title which would be more acceptable - at least as far as some of my committee members (some of whom have cerebral palsy) are concerned.

The general feeling was that the new title was totally inappropriate to the type of clients that we are dealing with.

M. G. Ackroyd, Hon. Sec., Durham County Spastics Society

The idea for the new title arose from discussions with many people, including those with cerebral palsy. It then went to the Executive Council where it was carefully considered before a decision was made. Reaction, generally, has been very favourable. However, we welcome comments from readers - Editor.

The confusions of Integration

Never have I met a person involved in separate education for the disadvantaged who did not agree with the notion of integration. The questions to be answered are where, when and how shall it take place?

Where is easily answered. Everywhere that education of non-handicapped people takes place, from nursery to university and through all the experiences of life.

When is a different matter. When I am no longer dependent upon there being a Special Education profession to give me the rewards of my present employment. When schools and colleges not dedicated to special need are able to cope with the complex and particular problems of young people with whom I deal. When I am no longer suspicious that the motive behind integration is, like care in the community, to save money. Whenever it will be, but not just yet.

How? By making separate provision unnecessary. By beginning the social and educational integration of young children at the nursery stage. By providing adequate resources for primary education.

Perhaps by using a different model for the Special School, one where teachers would work in integrated schools but remain members of a "special" school

LOCAL GROUP CHAIRMAN

The thoughts of an informed bystander

by Nick Carter

First, a brief word to explain why the Director's column has been handed over to me this month. I wrote to Sir John - a rather long letter - following his remarks in the February issue on "Team spirit" and, greatly to my surprise, I was offered this opportunity to present my views.

I make no claims for originality or profundity. These are the thoughts of a reasonably informed bystander; in other words, I have no direct personal experience of cerebral palsy in the family. My comments are based on nearly 70 years of ordinary living, the last 7 of which have seen me associated, as Secretary then Chairman, with the Canterbury and Kent Coast Spastics Group.

The points which follow are part philosophical and part practical.

Team spirit. To my mind this expression pre-supposes that the members of the team already know, and tacitly accept, what the goal is. It also assumes that they know and accept their particular role in the team. The Society has defined its overall aims and objectives (see *Spastics News* September 1982) and most of us can identify with them. But there are still areas, it seems to me, where there is scope for further discussion and clarification.

Integration. Despite The Society's definition, "to promote and develop services for the best possible education and training of spastic men, women and children according to their needs

from which they could draw both emotional and line management support. The "special" school would have no classrooms but provide a meeting place and a professional infrastructure.

From these roots a healthy system of integrated education could grow to reach secondary, further and higher education.

What a wonderful, rational and evolutionary approach to the problem! But can it wait that long? If good will was enough then all disadvantaged young people would now be educated with their non-disadvantaged fellows.

As it is, I feel doubly confused. First, I have tried to offer the "best" education to my pupils. But I have met others, whose motives I cannot impugn, who offer opposite notions of what the best is.

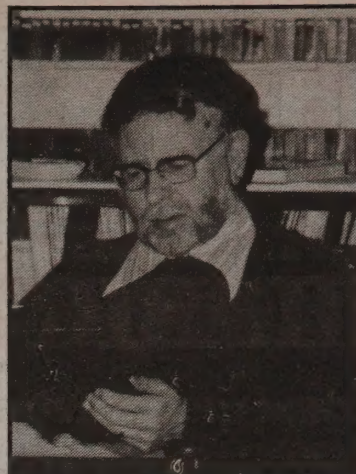
There appears to be no way to judge other than against personally held sets of values.

People with strong values seem prepared to undertake the unusual. Are those involved in "integration" projects right?

By what criterion shall we judge?

Suppose we decide on human values like happiness, dignity, a sense of achievement. I have seen pupils and students in segregated circumstances who display all these to as great a degree as anyone being educated in the mainstream.

If we choose achievement, would it not be fair to quote the achievements of students from segregated schools and colleges



Nick Carter

and potential capabilities" (my italics), we still hear the case argued as if it were a goal in itself - integration at all costs and in all circumstances.

Yet we know that, by its very nature, cerebral palsy covers a wide range of disability; each case has to be considered individually, and for the very profoundly handicapped there is, and in all likelihood will always be, a need for specialised treatment, education and training. **Anti-discrimination.** In its original sense, "discrimination" only means "observing a difference between". It is not necessarily *against* anything or anyone. As applied to those with cerebral palsy, it should mean no more than recognising their particular strengths and weaknesses and than taking whatever practical steps are available to enable them to make the best possible contribution to the community of which they are capable.

It is difficult to see how one can, sensibly, be "anti" this.

No doubt the meaning has become distorted in modern usage but the remedy for this - and the achievement of "equal opportunities for the handicapped" which is presumably what is intended by the anti-discrimination lobby - may well mean a lengthy process of re-education for the handi-

capped no less than the non-handicapped.

The blunt weapon of legislation could well prove counter-productive.

State obligations. What should be the role of voluntary organisations like The Spastics Society *vis-a-vis* the State (including local health, education and social services)?

In particular, in these days of financial stringency and "rate-capping", what should be the response of a local group like ours to an article such as appeared in a recent issue of *The Kentish Gazette* under the heading "Fears that cash cuts will cost babies' lives - tough decisions face consultant"?

A consultant paediatrician at Kent and Canterbury Hospital wrote, "We are being asked to make savings on babies who are in a critical state... We have two babies in the (Special Care Baby) Unit at the moment who would have died if it were not for our intervention. How can you put a price on that?"

The savings demanded were only £3,000. "But it will make such a difference to us," said the consultant.

Our Group could solve his dilemma at a stroke (we have purchased vital equipment for this Unit in the past). But are we justified in handing over public money to plug the gaps in the State system and, perhaps, positively encouraging further cuts in other essential services?

I had more to say on the need for consultation between professional staff, voluntary workers, and the cerebral palsied themselves to identify and meet needs and avoid overlapping with other voluntary bodies; also for sensible criteria to decide when we help finance a new, unproven, local project as against continuing our support of well-established Society institutions.

Perhaps what I have written will stimulate others, better qualified than I, to continue the debate.

such as the RNIB and the RNID as well as The Spastics Society?

Hence my second confusion. Is the decision to integrate political, and if so what motives guide it? Deliberate withholding of information? Value for money? If the former, then those who control the information should pass it on. If the latter, then the case is not proved.

Perhaps integration is the sort of issue, like comprehensive education, where to achieve unity a decision must be made and we must take it on trust and have a go.

John H. Hall
Principal,
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REPORTS

London Festival of Computing: IT Conference

"Just frustrating"

I shall remember this conference... because I enjoyed the food!

The rest of the conference on 16 April, and the exhibition at County Hall, will remain a little vague, remembered only with irritation.

Given a press release which

He commented pointedly about the lack of training in operating aids, and expressed doubts about the knowledge possessed by various disability organisations. I wonder if that applies to this organisation?

The other two speakers were concerned about employment for disabled people and very knowledgeable on their subjects. However, it was not a conference about employment as an isolated subject, but about IT in an employment context.

Bert Massie of RADAR spoke in his usual witty manner about definitions of "disability" and "technology", which taken together can minimise impairment and give a disabled person greater equality at work.

Bluntly, no! Only 5 of the 18 machines had representatives there to explain them; only two-thirds were actually in use; and the two GLC computer staff simply could not be everywhere at once.

Given some understanding of computers, the visitor would probably have been able to operate the unmanned machines. Mainly, though, it was just frustrating.

Chris Davies

The Society's Headteachers' Meeting

Questions all the way

Twelve heads of schools and colleges as well as Directors and staff from The Society met at Park Crescent, London, on 3 April.

The Director, John Cox, talked about proposals for The Society's future objectives which he will present to the Executive Council this month. They will include provision for cp people in the 19 to 25 age group and those needing placements in residential centres. (The present waiting list is 100.)

An exercise in zero budgeting is to be carried out at a residential centre. It will be a team exercise involving the social services and finance divisions. John Cox invited letters from Heads on how savings could be made. They should be involved in fundraising for their own units he said.

Richard Tomlinson of Thomas Delarue School asked about future assessment procedures. He was told that assessments at Fitzroy Square would continue but that, wherever possible, assessments would be carried out by the panel at schools and colleges. The Head and staff would be involved and the Head would retain final responsibility for admissions.

John Hall of Dene College asked about future policy on the over 19s. John Cox asserted that no one with cp who had received education in a Society school or college should return to a sub-normality hospital, but various options had to be considered and savings made. John Belcher would be looking at how waiting lists in residential centres could be reduced. A wide-ranging review was needed to find ways to prevent this problem recurring.

It was announced that in future, funds for computer de-

velopment would be allocated centrally in consultation with the new Computer Co-ordinator.

Asked about the possibility of the DHSS supplying computers more cheaply than the Possum machines presently provided, John Cox called for a study, but said that money was limited.

Frank Jagger of Hawksworth Hall School asked whether The Society should have a uniform policy for care staff in all its educational establishments, but Betty Adams and Jill Carne felt this should only apply to conditions of service.

A new formula has been tried by the Personnel Department to assess numbers of care staff at Thomas Delarue. Each Head will receive a copy of the formula and be asked to apply it to his or her own school and send in the results.

Anita Maunsell, Head of Publicity and Information, and Helen Donaghue, the Press Officer, talked about how their departments can help schools and colleges with publicity if they are kept informed of what is going on. Richard Tomlinson thought The Society needed a higher profile for its educational achievements.

Mark Vaughan talked of developments in his Centre for Studies in Integration. He hoped for an exchange of information between the Centre and schools and colleges, and a meeting to discuss the implications of the 1981 Education Act.

George Marshall and other teachers said that local education authorities and others outside The Society had the impression that the Centre ran counter to The Society's educational policy.

John Cox was sympathetic, but said that integration was part of The Society's thinking. He thought EEC funding for integration projects should be investigated.

Mark Vaughan has been asked to visit all The Society's schools and colleges and report back.

John Cox agreed to another meeting in the summer term to discuss educational matters. A suggestion was accepted that there should be more meetings directly concerned with educational rather than administrative matters - and that Heads should put forward ideas for the agenda.

Wynn Evans

Education Department

The Society's Regional Seminar

Regional fund-raising up 20 per cent

Staff of The Society's Regional Division met at Castle Priory from 11-13 April for their annual seminar to review progress and look ahead.

The seminar was attended for the first time by members of the appeals staff of the Scottish Council for Spastics. Another "first-timer" was The Society's Director, John Cox, who was required to "sing for his supper" as the after-dinner speaker on the first evening.

Much time was devoted to producing a staff structure that would enable the Division to achieve its agreed aims and objectives for the year.

The message from Ann Hithersay was that no hasty decisions would be made and that the views of both the staff and the voluntary sector of The Society would be canvassed.

Peter McCabe, the newly appointed Regions Fund Raising Manager, congratulated the fund raisers on their excellent performance for the financial year, 1983/4. A 20 per cent increase in gross income had been achieved, bringing the final total to £1,332,000.

Nigel Smith, the newly appointed Regions Service Development Manager, stressed that his appointment underlined The Society's commitment to develop new and necessary community based services which will benefit cp people and their families, as well as improve the quality of support which staff give to local groups.

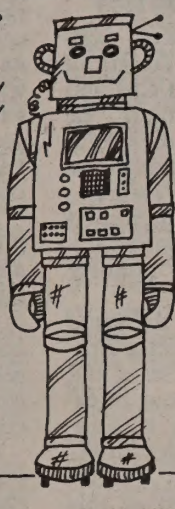
Anita Maunsell talked about how the work of The Society could be publicised effectively with videos. She suggested that they could be used in primary schools to break down prejudice towards handicap and raise funds, and that the film departments of colleges and polytechnics might be persuaded to make videos of what is going on in the regions for use by local groups.

A committee was set up to discuss the possibilities.

Peter McCabe

CONFERENCE '84

"IT'S A ROBOT DESIGNED TO SHOW VISITORS THE WAY AROUND THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE, BUT NOBODY SEEMS TO KNOW WHERE THE START BUTTON IS..."



INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
STARTS HERE

Wendy Wheeler

states that the conference "aims to demonstrate the use of electronic aids to overcome physical disabilities, specifically in employment", the natural expectation is that the speakers will be substantially orientated towards Information Technology.

I was disappointed.

Of the three speakers, only one, Brian Payne of British Telecom, gave a general overview of electronic aids. Mr Payne spoke not only with the experience of his job, but also from firsthand knowledge of how electronic aids can help the visually handicapped - this being his own disability.

The precis of his presentation appeared to promise examples of specific aids. These, sadly, did not materialise.

He did, however, mention the "sonic guide" - glasses emitting stereo sonic signals which identify potential obstacles. He has used it himself, but it is known only to a few blind people although it has been available since 1972.

Cecil Pettit, formerly of Plessey and now Chairman of the Northampton Council for the Disabled, said how easy life at work had been for him, and then offered details of financial aid to facilitate jobs for disabled people.

In fairness, the press release did not state that these two speakers would talk about IT, but why were they not required to do so? As part of the London Festival of Computing, this is surely not the place for a seminar on employment.

Mr Pettit claimed that we live in a very "caring society." It was pointed out that 1500 representatives from the private sector had been invited to the conference and had not come. How, he was asked, could they be induced to attend such events? He answered that free drinks and food, and VIPs (preferably royalty) were the best incentive. What kind of "caring society" is that?

Did the 1500 representatives miss much in the exhibition?

be a euphemism for further cuts. It also welcomes a survey to find out "the number of disabled people, their circumstances and their needs."

However, such a survey could take five years to complete and would postpone even longer a fully comprehensive system which includes special provision for disabled people.

As John Cox wrote to Tony Newton, MP, Minister for the Disabled, on 5 April, "The Society hopes that there will be more and continuing improvements in benefits for disabled people and that they will be implemented in parallel to the survey rather than waiting for its outcome."

Anti-discrimination bills - no go

The fate of Lord Longford's Bill in the Lords was mentioned briefly last month: it was thrown

out at its Third Reading by a Government majority of 19.

The Disabled Person's Bill, introduced by the Conservative peer, Lord Campbell of Croy, did better: it received its Third Reading in the Lords and was duly sent to the Commons.

However, since the Government refuses to facilitate its passage through the House by giving it time, its fate looks sealed.

VAT - concessions limited

During the Second Reading of the Finance (No.2) Bill on 10 April, the burden of extending VAT to building alterations was mentioned by Jeff Rooker, MP, Junior Opposition Treasury Spokesman. He pointed out that even with the concessions already announced by Barney Hayhoe MP, charities would still be seriously affected.

MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

Social Security reviews — cautious welcome

Preparing new welfare programmes to meet the needs of the 1990s is, according to Political Editor of *The Sunday Times*, (29 April) one of Mrs Thatcher's priorities over the next five years and confirms the importance of the four reviews announced by Norman Fowler MP, on 2 April. The reviews will cover retirement pensions, housing benefits, supplementary benefits and benefits for families, children and young people. Reports are expected by the end of the year.

The Spastics Society welcomes the reviews, though it is concerned that Mr Fowler's talk of simplifying the system could

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Child Benefit - is more money the only way?

Linda Avery examines the alternatives for allocating a fixed resource

The end of this month should see the announcement of the Government's intended benefit up-ratings which will take effect from November.

Despite protracted lobbying by various welfare agencies, the Government has already made it clear that Child Benefit (CB) increases will not be used as a means of reducing the poverty trap.

Yet this is one benefit which goes to all families with children, regardless of the family's income - including earnings - and substantial increases in CB would not act as a disincentive to work.

The Government's main argument against such increases is that public spending must not be increased.

How, then, could current expenditure on CB's be used more effectively to give more benefit to low income families?

The introduction of Family Allowances (FA) and Child Tax Allowances (CTA) - the forerunner of CB - was largely influenced by the Beveridge Report of 1942.

Beveridge said that the only way of guaranteeing a reasonable subsistence income for all families, whether in work or not, was to pay an allowance for children.

CBs were introduced by the Child Benefit Act 1975. The idea was to merge FAs and CTAs into a new, universal, non-means tested, tax free, cash benefit for all children - including the first - to be paid direct to the mother.

It was originally hoped that

with CTAs abolished, government revenue would rise so that CBs would become more generous. As most families coping with the current £6.50 per week per child will confirm, this has not been the case.

It is frequently argued that there are many ways in which existing expenditure on CB can be made more selective so as to concentrate help on those most in need. I dealt with the pitfalls of selective benefits last year (*Spastics News* June 1983).

What are the alternatives?

Age-related benefit

CTAs were, and Supplementary Benefit (SB) are, age related. There is no doubt that the cost of a child varies with age.

However, relating benefits to age raises fundamental objections. If the Government is not prepared to increase expenditure as a whole, any improvement at one end of the age scale would have to be at the cost of a reduction at the other end. Neither can be afforded.

In addition, age relating of benefits creates administrative complexities and is therefore costly.

Families are more likely to be poor if they are large, and many countries pay allowances according to the child's position in the family - ie. 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

Larger families are also likely to have out-of-work incomes closer to incomes in work, so there may be an incentive to concentrate help on them.

This invites the accusation

that the state is paying for families to have more children.

But one should not forget that benefits can have various effects. For example, there is the substitution effect: increased benefits lower the marginal cost of a child so may temper the financial constraints.

There is also the income effect: additional income in the family may encourage the parents to stop having children rather than risk a drop in living standards.

More importantly, however, there are administrative difficulties and therefore increased costs associated with varying benefits according to family size.

In a similar way to Family Income Supplement (FIS) and means-tested benefits, CBs could be income related, ie through the tax system. There are several variations of this so that a benefit could be provided for all families but vary according to family size and income, and be based on earnings during the last tax year.

Again, this could cause marginal tax rate problems. Although CBs could be reduced slowly as income rose so as to avoid this, the experience of Denmark shows that it would be very expensive and a variety of administrative problems would follow. In any case "family income" is never a reliable indicator of the income available to mothers, and concentrating help just on the poorest families is highly divisive.

A final alternative is to improve FIS. But if FIS is tailored to

meet the needs of individuals this could cut across the scheme's principle of simplicity. In any case, it would only help those working more than 24 hours per week.

The campaign to abolish CTAs sought to transfer some of the resources foregone in CTAs into the pockets of families with incomes below the tax threshold, and to shift resources from the father to the mother.

There are now few families with incomes below the tax threshold, and the re-introduction of CTAs might improve the position of a vast majority.

However, this would benefit tax payers - higher tax payers most - and fathers at the expense of mothers. If the tax threshold rises, CTAs fail to benefit a large number of the poorest families.

Government policy

Prior to taking office, Conservatives argued in favour of substantially increased CBs and that the cost should be accounted for in the same way as a reduction in personal taxation and not as public expenditure.

They now say that increased CBs mean increased public expenditure which the country cannot afford.

CBs and CTAs have the same effect on the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement, so if the Government is unwilling to increase CB substantially, it is unlikely that it will consider the re-introduction of CTAs.

If CB was brought into tax, this would make the benefit more progressive and would raise more revenue with which to finance it. Families below the tax threshold would get the full benefit; those at higher rate bands

would get less. Though simpler, it would still create administrative costs and little extra revenue would be gained.

Unless thresholds could be substantially raised, the vast majority of poor families would pay a standard rate so that, in a sense, "families" would be paying for "families".

Successive governments have pleaded poverty when called upon to make reasonable universal increases in CB. Certainly tax relief enjoyed by the wealthy could be cut, as could defence spending. But given the Government's philosophy, neither would be politically possible.

Some Conservative MPs are embarrassed by the continuation of the Married Man's Tax Allowance - an additional relief given to married men simply because they are married and male.

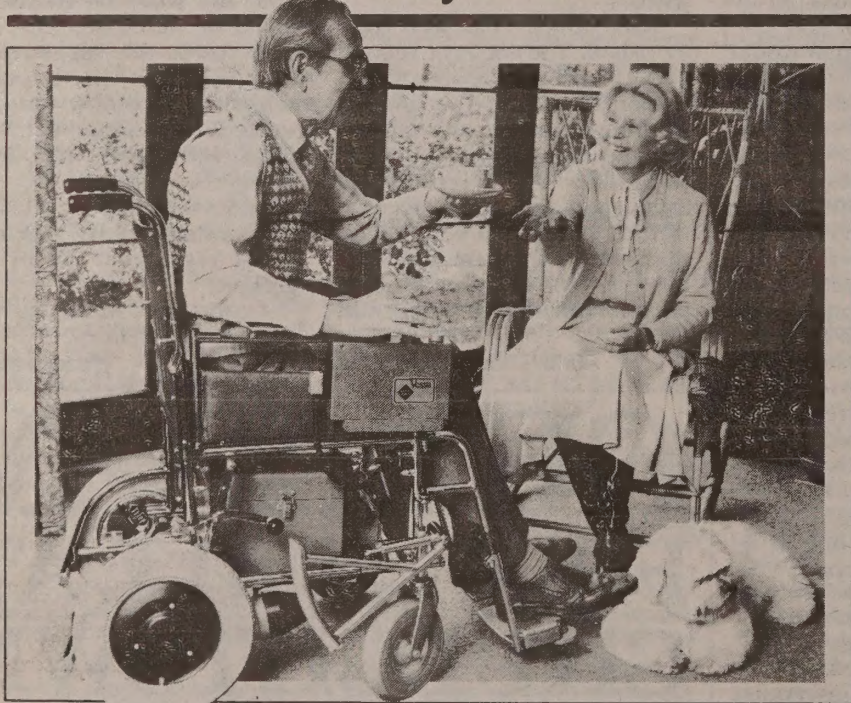
It has been estimated that the abolition of the allowance would raise sufficient revenue to increase CB by at least £3 a week. As a result, poorer families would not have to bear the costs when revenues are raised from general tax, such as increases in VAT, or where there are price rises.

Inefficient and inadequate through they are, CBs are the most effective way the Government has of boosting the incomes of working families generally and is therefore the major way of restoring the position of the family relative to the rest of the community.

One way or another, the present administration has to be persuaded that children are one of our most precious resources; everyone has an obligation to them, parents or not.

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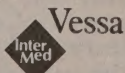
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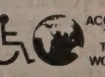
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Child's play is more than a game at Cranage Hall

Cranage Hall Hospital in Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, is home for about 460 mentally handicapped people of whom less than 30 are under 19. It has recently become the setting for two of the 15 play schemes in long-stay hospitals funded by the DHSS Opportunities for Volunteering programme and administered by a group of 5 charities, including The Spastics Society.

Each of the two Cranage schemes has an annual budget of about £6,000. This pays the play leader's salary (20 hours a week), and provides for toys and training.

A team of volunteers help the play leader and receive £2 for each session, (£2 a day is the maximum a volunteer can earn without affecting his or her claim to social security.)

The Cranage schemes are supported by a team in the North West.

Nigel Smith, ex-Senior Regional Officer for the North West negotiated with hospitals to set up the play schemes, and found sponsorship from local groups of The Spastics Society. Brenda Cook of Save the Children provides professional support and guidance as Play Scheme Advisor for the North of England, and Jack Eggington, administrator and appeals officer for Stockport, East Cheshire and High Peaks Spastics Society acts as a local back-up and contact.

The first Cranage scheme was

started in November 1982 for 21 hyperactive, mentally handicapped 11 to 25-year-olds in Fir Villa. None of these children can make themselves properly understood, and all are difficult to manage. Many are prone to abscond. About a quarter of the youngsters attend a school in the hospital grounds run by the Cheshire Education Authority.

Wendy Thompson, 25, is employed as play leader. She holds the play scheme at weekends to give the children a break from the week's routine and to fill the long weekend hours.

Many of the play activities take place outside the ward in a room the children helped to decorate for the purpose.

"The playroom is their room," said Wendy. "They know that when they are there it is to enjoy themselves, so although they can be very destructive on the ward, they will act differently in the playroom."

The children enjoy a wide range of activities. In the art line these include painting, printing, collage and mask making. Wendy and the volunteers also arrange music sessions. These might be quite structured, or what Wendy describes as a "free-for-all."

Cooking is popular. All the children take part, regardless of their ability.

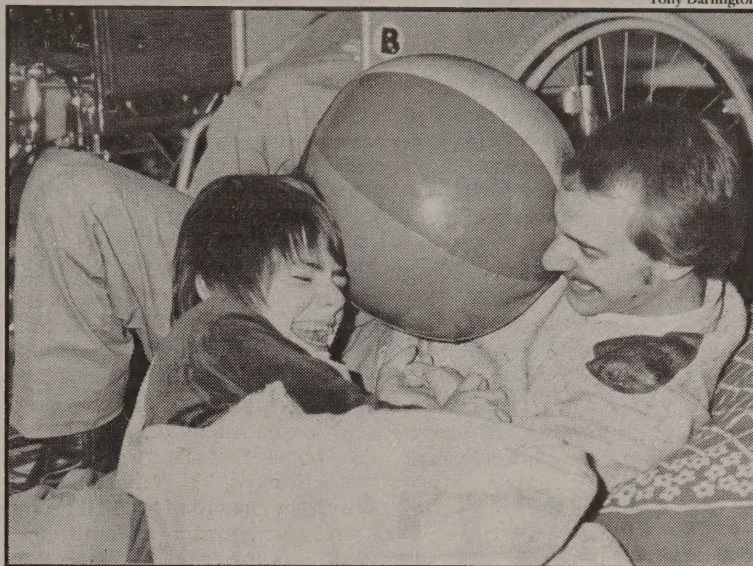
"The more able groups weigh and mix the ingredients, roll out (and taste, of course). The less

able do some more rolling and cut out the biscuits, or whatever is being made," Wendy explained.

"Then the food is baked and brought into the playroom with a pot of tea. Everyone enjoys eat-

cornflower paste. The children enjoy the wet/dry feel as the volunteers pour the paste over the children's hands and encourage them to experiment with it.

Several children respond to music. When the lights in the



Volunteer Tim Spencer lies down to be on eye level with Teresa Blake from Hazel Villa. The game of ball can then begin.

ing what they have made."

Other activities take place outside the hospital. Some children go roller-skating at Sandbach Leisure Centre, and they all adore swimming.

The success of the Fir play scheme led to the establishment of a second one at Hazel Villa in August 1983. Hazel Villa caters for 22 profoundly handicapped youngsters. Sue Wilson, 26, was employed as the play leader after 8 months experience as a volunteer on the Fir Scheme.

Like Wendy, Sue started by decorating an old outside storage room as a play room.

At first the children were unresponsive. "They would just sit and look at us," Sue said.

Though these children are considerably less able than those on Fir, the stimulation and enjoyment they now receive from play is obvious.

Sue and her 7 enthusiastic volunteers try to stimulate the children with texture. One way is by allowing them to play with

playroom are turned off and replaced with coloured, flashing disco lights and music, children who had appeared passive, become suddenly animated, swaying their bodies, banging drums and shaking bells.

One of the most successful activities has been horse-riding. Sue and the volunteers take a group of 6 children. At first they just stroked the horses - now they are sitting up straight and trotting.

"It's incredible," said one of the volunteers, Tim Spencer. "They love it. On the bus home they just can't contain themselves. Since the scheme started, the children have a lot more confidence and are more alert and active."

Few people who see either play scheme in operation need much convincing of their value.

"We think the play schemes are very good. If we had more money we would extend them," said Cliff Carr, administrator of Cranage Hall Hospital.

The ward staff on Hazel and Fir are also enthusiastic.

"It's not a case of us and them," said Wendy. "We sometimes arrange trips with staff and patients, and we liaise about the children."

"They didn't come one weekend and we really missed them," said Ann Bettelley, ward nurse on Fir. "Without them the children only have the daily routine, so the scheme is exceptionally valuable to us."

The playleaders have even received praise from relatives of the children.

Few of the children on Hazel have regular family contact, but Beryl Jones, who visits her grandson there every week, wrote:

"I would like to thank you for the wonderful work your volunteers are doing with the children."

"I have noticed a big improvement in most of them over the last few months; they are much more alert and active. I just did not believe that many of them had the capabilities to do the things they are now able to do."

Though the play schemes are so successful, there is doubt about their future. DHSS funding could be withdrawn after an annual review in August.

According to Nigel Smith, this short-term funding was the reason other hospitals gave for refusing to have similar play schemes. Some administrators felt it was not fair to raise expectations if the scheme could end after one year.

However, that reason could also reflect a lack of commitment to improving the quality of life within particular hospitals, he said.

Sue and Wendy are hoping that both Cranage schemes will be allowed to continue.

"We had to start from scratch, and now that the play schemes are established and a part of the children's lives, it would be a great waste if they were to collapse," Wendy said.

And what would the children feel?

Theresa Allen



Children from Hazel Villa and volunteers enjoy playing with cornflower paste. Its unusual texture means it can be poured, smeared and even rolled into lumps. This is one of the messier activities!

CASTLE PRIORY

Views at the top

Trevor Stephens reports on a course held last month at Castle Priory

When students were asked last month to evaluate Castle Priory's course on the mentally handicapped adult in residential care, the views came out top. It was not the College gardens running down to the River Thames that they meant, but the opinions of five people from the clients' committee at Kidlington Adult Training Centre near Oxford, who came to explain how they would like their services organised.

They were Michael Edwards, Richard Steele, Joan White, Michelle Edmunds and Ted Mann.

"If you are providing a service, then it is essential that you ask the consumer of that service whether he is getting what he needs," commented a student from Leeds.

"In the field of mental handicap, we have often asked parents

and 'the experts' and ignored the views of the very people we are serving."

(This reminded me of a talk I once had with a solicitor. He showed surprise when I described handicapped people I worked with as "clients". "The people I work for are called clients", he said, and I wondered if we in the caring professions were as quick to respond to a client's instructions.)

After introductions and lunch, each speaker took an informal group of about five students and explained how they had set up the committee at Kidlington and why it was important that their views were heard.

Michael Edwards, the committee chairman, proved to be a very entertaining speaker.

At the plenary meeting at the end of the session, some major issues were raised again.

What changes had been made at the ATC as a result of committee suggestions?

"Confidentiality forms have been introduced", said Michael Edwards. "I heard about the idea at a conference here at Castle Priory. All workers, including volunteers, have to sign one if they are going to look at a person's file."

"Why did you want these



Michael Edwards, right, the committee chairman, and Michelle Edmunds, take part in the discussion.

forms?" one of the students probed. "Well, we didn't want people repeating things they'd read about us in the files," Michael replied.

At 8 days, this is one of the longer courses on the Castle Priory broadsheet and it has the rather distinctive feature of offering another weekend course in the middle of it. The result was an injection of another 20 students for a workshop on the Makaton signing system.

"Makaton is certainly not

new", explained Linda Matthews, team leader for the project, "and we try to concentrate on current applications rather than the original research. But there is still great demand for places on workshops as many people wish to improve their signing or new staff want to learn. The number of schools and centres using Makaton is still increasing."

This was reinforced by the fact that Linda had returned from a Makaton Workshop in Norway only two hours before the Castle Priory course.

The workshop generated a lot of enthusiasm as students began to practise new-found signing skills. By Saturday evening, Gloria Packwood, the team's teacher, appeared to forget a leg injury as she gave a very lively demonstration of how to teach a severely handicapped child the first few signs.

Sunday morning, and the final "rest period" of the workshop was declared a "silent coffee break." All communication had to be by sign only. One student was telling me, or should I say signing to me, about a friend who was a vegetarian. "He not eat cows", he signed; "he not eat pigs, he not eat sheep."

I "asked" him what his friend

did eat. There was some obvious hesitation as he searched for a sign that he knew. Then I got my answer: "Flowers!"

As the Makaton workshop closed, the new input of students left and the course returned to its former number for the final part of the programme.

The 8 days provided a shop window for many of the current themes in the field of handicap. There were sessions on aspects of normalisation, goal planning, stress in residential care, field study, maturation and sexual awareness, and a practical period on introducing music for the inexperienced, which was very popular.

But the lasting impression for many people was the importance of listening more carefully to what the client has to say, demonstrating perhaps that "views are still news" particularly if they are the views of the service receivers.

As Joan White, a very experienced lady from Kidlington ATC, said to her group, "Just ask me what you want to know. I'll answer."

As this course was over subscribed, a similar programme without the Makaton weekend workshop will be run 22-29 June 1984.



CEREBRAL PALSY
OVERSEAS

The Spastic Society of Victoria, Australia, provides specialised services for the treatment and care of people with cerebral palsy.

Its main objective is to ensure that these people reach their greatest level of self reliance and/or potential as contributing members of the community. "Participating in Life's Opportunities", the theme for 1984, sums up the Society's goals.

The Society provides daily services to approximately 1,300 people with disabilities. Many others use the paramedical services and waiting lists continue to grow.

In 1984, needs are met individually through education, training, medical services, physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapies, transport, recreation, accommodation, employment and social work.

In 1948, however, none of these facilities were available.

Like most voluntary organisations, the Spastic Society of Victoria came into being through the inspiration of a small group of dedicated parents and friends who were concerned at the lack of services in the community. Cerebral palsied children could not gain access to the existing special schools and services for the physically disabled.

After dedicated work and lobbying, the group was granted premises through the Victorian



The VOCRISS (Voice Output Communicator) developed by the Spastic Society of Victoria can be adapted to individual needs - even to giving a half-hour lecture.

AUSTRALIA

Richard Gray explains how the Spastic Society of Victoria is going ahead with new initiatives.

State Government.

Today the needs of disabled children and adults are met in the community in many ways. There are 12 day training centres - four in the country and 8 within metropolitan Melbourne - 2 special schools, 11 accommodation units and 12 employment units.

The Society has one of the largest private bus fleets in Victoria with 104 buses.

Y.O.T.T. (Your Opportunity

to Talk) is a self-help group of disabled people within the Society which provides input to the Management and Council of the Society. It was set up in 1974 as an advisory body.

The Society has an annual budget of some \$A 17.4 million (about £11.25 million) and a staff of about 1,000. This makes it the largest centre for spastic services in Australia.

Funding comes from the Australian Commonwealth Gov-

ernment and from the Victorian State Government. Fundraising is an important part of the Society's activities.

In February 1982, the Society adopted a Philosophy Statement which has become the basis of its strategy for the rest of the decade. Its theme: "Each person has an inherent right to participate in life's opportunities. Disabled people have special needs which, when left unmet, limit the individual's opportunity to develop to his/her maximum potential. The Spastic Society is a grouping of resources which exists to enable disabled persons with special needs to increase their capacity to participate in life's opportunities."

New initiatives are characteristic of the Society. One development has been VOCRISS (Voice Output Communicator), a microcomputer-based aid for people who cannot speak.

The VOCRISS has a voice and can be adapted to the needs of each customer. The owner will be able to speak to several people at once - deliver a half-hour lecture if necessary - and question and interject quickly.

The aid is portable, durable and can be connected to a printer to give a hard copy. At about \$A 2,000-3,000 (about £1,293-£1,616) it is relatively cheap.

VOCRISS is Australian, right down to its accent.

It has been developed as a joint project between the Spastic Society of Victoria and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The components (all commercially made) are produced locally whenever possible, and the units will be produced by Telmar Communications in Melbourne. The Society is responsible for co-ordinating manufacturing and

marketing.

The base unit will be held by the Society, and here lies another exciting aspect of the product. Alterations and updating will be done by computer programmers who are disabled and working in the computer software programming department of one of the Society's employment units.

Another exciting break-

Derek Lancaster-Gaye



The developer of VOCRISS, Andrea Goldsmith, Chief Speech Pathologist for the Society.

through has been the invention of a forward-facing wheelchair restraint anchorage for buses which will replace the widely-used side anchorages. The new anchorage can be fitted to all forms of public transport and will enable those in wheel chairs to use public transport without having to be lifted in and out of their wheelchairs.

The system has been put through rigorous trials. Government funding is expected for further research and production.

As we turn from an inward looking to an outward looking organisation, the knowledge and experience developed by our professional staff may be extremely useful to Cerebral Palsy Overseas.

Richard Gray is General Manager of the Spastic Society of Victoria Ltd.



A mosque in Damascus, a city surrounded by hills.



Mrs Shaza Al-Wareh plans to start a cp society in Syria.

SYRIA

A cry for help

Linda Shannon undermines the fear and superstition

I spent four days in the Arab Republic of Syria last month, following a request three weeks before from Mrs. Shaza Al-Wareh for Cerebral Palsy Overseas to help.

Never having been to the Middle East before, I did not know what to expect. My initial welcome took the form of a delayed flight and the news on arrival in Damascus that my suitcase was still in Istanbul.

Mr. and Mrs. Al-Wareh drove me at 2 a.m. to my hotel in the centre of Damascus. The noise of the Damascus rush-hour woke me at 7 a.m. - it sounded like an invasion!

The first person I met that day was Mr. Elias Habib, of Syrian television.

Elias presents a programme called "Health and Life" each week and he proved invaluable for his cheerfulness, his innumerable contacts and his support for a move to help cp people in Syria with Mrs. Al-Wareh.

Shaza Al-Wareh, 28, is attractive and vivacious. She is the mother of 6 year-old Lena, who was born in the UK and treated at the Ryegate Centre in Sheffield.

But on returning to Syria, the good work could not be carried on. Services for cp people do not exist, not even for children.

Shaza knows what has been achieved in the UK and has done

what she can for Lena since, but it all has to be done at home.

There is no specialist in cerebral palsy in Damascus (population 8 million - cp cases estimated at 35,000) and few doctors will see cases, as there is no profit in it. Indeed, the general medical view is that there is no point in helping cp children because "they're always mentally retarded and anyway they never live beyond the age of 17".

With this view prevailing amongst doctors, what chance does the man in the street stand?

The answer is none. The majority believe cp is hereditary or within the family, and that it is the result when first cousins marry.

Several cp children in one family is not uncommon and parents will go on having babies in an effort to have a healthy child. (It is important, too, to have normal male children, as the Qu'ran dictates that a man's fortune can only fall to his son, not his widow and daughters.)

Many believe that cp is a punishment from God, so they pray ever more fervently in the Mosque.

It is believed that looking upon a cp person, even on television, will transfer the condition to the beholder's family, so this is something a pregnant woman would never do.

When I told them of the achievements of The Spastics Society and of the integrated, educated, useful and long lives of UK cp people who marry and have children without cp, they were incredulous. I told them that this state of affairs could exist in Syria if they were willing and that CPO would do all it could to help.

I said this to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. (Currently only the blind and deaf

and dumb have services, employment and rights.)

I said this on a television interview, with Shaza putting the parent's viewpoint and Dr. Hani Mourtada putting a medical view. (Dr. Mourtada is one of the few doctors who is sympathetic towards cp.)

I said it to the journalist of a weekly newspaper, and to the *Syrian Times*.

And I said it to some parents I met, including a father who cried when he thought his son might have the opportunity to achieve even one-twentieth of what cp people here have attained.

Shaza has now been given permission to form a Society.

But it will not be easy. Leaflets and posters are not allowed and a gathering of more than five people requires official permission and a government officer in attendance.

There is no money available for facilities until the next 5-Year Plan in 1986.

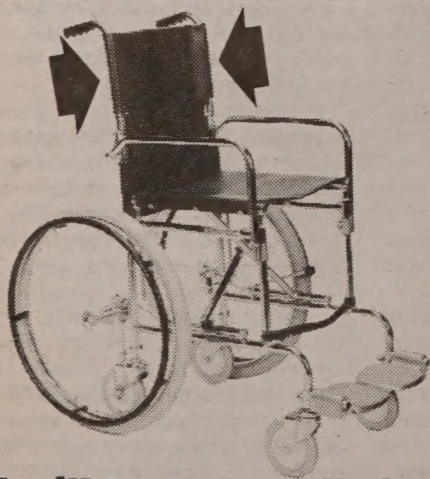
Prices are high and wages are low - even graduates earn less than £100 a month.

But Shaza's biggest hurdle will be attitudes. She has read hundreds of books on cp and written several articles herself. She is energetic and dedicated to helping her daughter and all other cp children in Syria, but she will still have an uphill struggle.

I returned with an official invitation for CPO to take a team of experts to Damascus next spring.

The Syrians seem a responsive people - I met with great friendliness and warmth while I was there - and I am sure that in time major changes will take place.

But a lot of work will need to be done to overcome the superstition that exists in Syria, even in the latter half of the 20th century.



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ITALY a new image

by Derek Lancaster-Gaye

Until my visit to Northern Italy in March, my awareness of services at the hands of our Latin friends was limited to their sudden, controversial decision about 7 years ago to close their special schools overnight in favour of an integrated system of education.

But a week in the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Milano has changed my attitude and produced a new and impressive image.

Like everywhere else, Italy has its share of problems, especially in the south. Money may be in short supply, but innovation and imagination are to be had in plenty, and usually through charitable organisations.

A fortunate combination exists between regional government funding for health and educational activities and major charities who are able to make decisions and get on with the job. The result is not one but several chains of admirable, multi-purpose centres around the country providing a range of facilities for people with cerebral palsy and their families.

Milano, Italy's business centre, has the Fondazione pro Juventute Don Carlo Gnocchi for disabled young people which offers early intervention and treatment at one end and industrial rehabilitation at the other.

I met Dr Orsenigo, the paediatric neurologist in charge



Venice - everyone's dream city.

of the cp clinic. I asked her which particular philosophies her therapists followed; after all, the UK has Bobath, Germany has Voijta, and the US has Doman and Temple Fay.

Her response was immediate. "Why, we have my method", she said. "After 20 years I think I can claim this."*

Don Gnocchi is also host to a first class aids centre like the Disabled Living Foundation's exhibition in London, with a computerised data base of aids and special equipment available in Italy. In the same premises Dr Piergiorgio Mazzola runs the Centre for Studies in Disability from his wheelchair.

Milano also has its branch of Associazione Italiana Assistenza Spastici which operates an excellent cp centre in the city, one of a number providing treatment and education around Italy.

And so the pattern continues.

Udine has its cp centre run by the local branch of AIAS under its energetic chairman, Mrs Ernestina Tam. Her influence extends to other services in this small and rather glamorous old Italian town, especially to services for the mentally handicapped.

*We hope Dr Orsenigo will write about her philosophy for *Disability Now*.

The Instituto Medico Pedagogico di Santa Maria Dei Colli, run by the Rev Mother Josephine, provides not only a caring environment but one with a highly professional and progressive approach.

At Udine there is also a fascinating and obviously successful "experiment" in self-help.

The Comunita Piergiorgio is a commune for a group of severely



Mrs Ernestina Tam, Chairman of the Udine AIAS, with Maria Costanza del Fabro.

disabled people led by Don Oheio Giani from his wheelchair.

Several of the members work in a new printing and bookbinding co-operative which has a handsome new building designed by CPO's Board member, architect Maria Constanza del

Fabro. The business is run entirely by disabled people with computer support, and makes a profit.

The community too makes enough of a "profit" to allow them to help others. They have established another community in the mountains and they own and operate a seaside holiday home on the Adriatic coast for disabled people and their families.

The sense of purpose and domestic togetherness, so evident during my evening with them, did much to dispel my doubts about communal living. In Italy it works, and they have a waiting list to prove it.

Co-operative effort is not confined to Udine. The Il Ponte Soc Co-operative in Milano also makes a profit and provides normal employment in light engineering for disabled workers.

Meaningful employment in the industrial North is hard to come by, given widespread unemployment. This co-operative enterprise provides both the means and the security of a regular job. The workshop has an excellent therapy unit as an integral service, funded by the regional government, which is open to others outside the workplace.

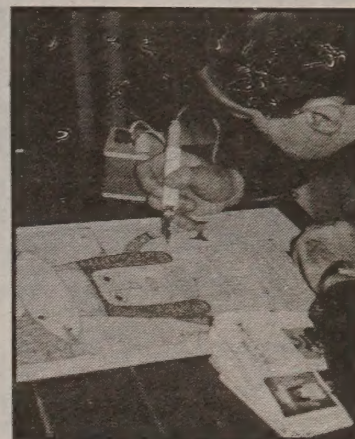
Perhaps my most exciting visit was to the Nostra Famiglia in its excellent centre - one of 24 in the country - at San Vito Tagliamento. Luxurious premises, enviable anywhere, offer a first class service in virtually every discipline. Besides traditional therapies, education and full dental and ophthalmic care, there is an innovative approach to the education and training of mentally handicapped young people.

Ample funding, an excellent and extensive staff and ideal buildings will always produce results. But here there is something more. It is a place to which to return.

CPO is hoping to co-operate with Nostra Famiglia on project work, for it too works in developing countries and has a successful record in Africa.

In Northern Italy I found a genuine enthusiasm to work with CPO. Various proposals discussed with the Minister of Health of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Government are now being followed up.

But what happened to the decision to close all those special schools? I saw three excellent ones. They still function because they are still needed, and the



Disabled artist at the Don Gnocchi organisation in Milano.

indications are they will continue.

There's something very familiar about all this.

Maria Constanza del Fabro and her colleague, Paolo de Rocco, are joint authors of an excellent book about good design for disabled people and the removal of architectural barriers. *Per un Controllo pro Gettuale Delle Barriere Architettoniche* is published in Italian by the Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia. For further information, contact CPO, 37 Queen Anne Street, London W1. Tel: 01-631 1778.

INTERNATIONAL

"Public awareness of disabled people has increased drastically in the last ten years," said E. Clarke Ross of United Cerebral Palsy Associations Inc. when we met in February.

"It is largely because the public school law and accessibility rulings have brought handicapped people into the public eye."

UCPA is made up of state and local groups across the United States. Dr Ross is director of the organisation's Governmental Activities Office in Washington D.C., which establishes its federal legislative priorities and lobbies for them.

Since 1973, every handicapped child in the country has, by law, been entitled to a free, public education "in the least restricting environment"; all federally-subsidised public transport projects must be accessible; and any organisation or company which receives funds or contracts from central government may not discriminate against the handicapped.

But United States anti-discrimination legislation does not mean that legislative battles are all won. Fighting for the survival of existing programmes which are federally-funded is a continual process as each one is reviewed every 3 years.

About 500 exist for the provision of social services, including between 40 and 50 specifically for disabled people. They contribute to the cost of such things as education, housing, transport and rehabilitation.

These programmes turn laws about accessibility and anti-discrimination into effect by providing federal subsidies for



Disabled and able-bodied ride together on Washington's Metro.

UNITED STATES

Anti-discrimination legislation isn't the end of the struggle

by Theresa Allen

such things as accessible vans, vocational training, income maintenance (similar to our supplementary benefit and disability allowance), and health insurance benefits.

Under the Reagan administration, the fight to protect these programmes has been particularly intense. Many have been threatened by proposed cut-backs, grant terminations, block funding and "turn backs" (which require the individual states to shoulder increased, if not total, financial responsibility for specific programmes.)

These policies are all part of President Reagan's commitment

to dismantle the bureaucracy of federal government, and to hand responsibility for health, education and social services back to state and local government.

"Reagan's proposals have been extreme, but you have to remember that Congress doesn't pass everything that's proposed," Dr Ross explained. "Still, there has been a slow-down in programmes for the disabled."

"Our main aim currently is to maintain operation of these programmes and to make sure they meet their original purposes - which means getting better funding for them," he said.

Education for disabled chil-

dren is a case in point.

"Every family can be involved with working out an education programme for its child, and the local school systems can be, and have been, sued for non-compliance with the law," said Dr Ross.

UCPA is working with other interest groups for the disabled to stop President Reagan cutting federal assistance for therapists, aides and attendants in schools.

Transportation is another area that needs vigilance from all groups lobbying for the rights of disabled people. Although the law says that public transportation which is federally subsidised must be accessible, Dr Ross claims that under the present administration the law has not been rigorously complied with or enforced.

How accessible public transport is depends largely on where you live.

Washington D.C. has an efficient, modern underground system called Metro, designed to be totally accessible. All stations have glass lifts for disabled people; trains line-up flush with the platform so that wheelchairs can board easily; and flashing lights on the platform let deaf people know a train is coming.

A bus system, Metrobus, supplements the service. Some of the most popular routes have wheelchair lifts and an individual can arrange for a bus with a lift to be on a particular route at a specific time.

In spite of complaints of buses failing to appear, the Metro system offers disabled Washingtonians considerable freedom.

Unfortunately, it is also expensive, and systems like it are not available in other American

cities.

The kind of care the federal government should be helping to provide for severely disabled adults - particularly the mentally handicapped - is now being discussed in Washington.

The federal Medicaid programme, a \$21 billion programme covering health services, provides money for those in institutional care, but very little for those receiving home or community based services. So there is a strong financial disincentive for states to close their institutions and provide alternative care - at a time when many professionals and disability lobby groups are rejecting the philosophy of institutional care.

A Bill before the Senate Committee on Finance would transfer Medicaid funds from institutional to community settings.

"We are for this Bill, even though we operate a handful of nursing homes that would be closed down if it passed," said Dr Ross.

Employment of the handicapped has made least progress during the last 10 years, Dr Ross believes. Although federal funding or contracts technically prevent discrimination, and the law requires "reasonable accommodation" for a disabled employee, it is unclear how far this accommodation should go.

Accommodation might be a ramp, flexible working hours, or expensive equipment.

"Where accommodation involves a lot of changes, and possibly a lot of money, many difficulties emerge," Dr Ross said.

Bernard Posner, Director of The President's Committee on

Continued on page 16

Gardening 1984: Harvesting the opportunities

Mary Wilkinson finds out what is happening in the year of the International Garden Festival

The Advertiser, South Croydon



"The gang of five" - Dolly Robertson, her daughter, Mary, and the dogs - in the garden Dolly created which is open to the public.

Disability need be no bar to an enthusiastic gardener, as the number of people in wheelchairs at the Chelsea Flower Show proves every year.

Given determination, advice and the right tools, there is no reason why disabled people, including those who are visually handicapped, should not have the pleasure of sowing, cultivating and harvesting like anyone else.

You might even get your garden into the National Gardens Scheme - Dolly Robertson has.

When she became disabled in 1971, it didn't stop Dolly gardening. With the help of her daughter, Mary, and some IVS students, she set about redesigning part of her garden at West Wickham, Kent, to suite a wheelchair.

The result was a sunken garden approximately 70 ft by 24 ft with raised beds where she specialises in salads and vegetables.

"We used second-hand paving stones," she said. "The whole garden only cost about £70."

She also has her own line in "cheap tools". Her hoe is an old paint scraper. For fine weeding she uses an old table fork, and for double digging she uses a full-size fork that was broken by one of the students; the metal shaft has been padded by Mary so that Dolly can put it under her arm.

Having created the garden and then added a specially adapted greenhouse, Dolly wanted to share them. "I thought, I can't have all this for myself."

So she rang up the National Gardens Scheme, and in 1978 the garden was opened to the public.

It is still the only garden specially for disabled people among nearly 1,700 others. No charge is made, but there is a collecting box. Dolly gets between 40 and 50 visits a year. (It is best if you telephone for an appointment.)

"With a Home Improvement Grant I have been able to have a small lift installed so disabled visitors can now come up to the house for a cup of tea!" she said triumphantly.

Dolly was at Battersea Park, London, last month when The Society for Horticultural Therapy and Rural Training launched its "Season of Gardening Activities" at the demonstration garden for disabled people.

In January, Horticultural Therapy, a registered charity, took over all garden research and advisory services from the Disabled Living Foundation, including the demonstration gardens at Battersea, Syon Park and Wisley.

"Without the DLF these gardens would probably not have existed," said Ed Macalister-Smith, Deputy-Director. "We

hope we can keep up the tradition."

Horticultural Therapy has arranged a series of free half-day workshops from May to October at Battersea, where disabled people can see a demonstration and try their hand at preparing a hanging basket, growing in containers, taking cuttings, pruning, planting bulbs and making a bottle garden.

The places have been snapped up, but if funding for a permanent garden advisor comes through soon from the Greater London Council, Ed Macalister-Smith thinks that with the support of the Parks Department he could probably organise more workshops this season.



Elizabeth Smyth and Robert Cooke potting out geraniums at Thorngrove. House plants and bedding plants will be on sale at the Open Day, 19 May.

He sees the workshops as a way of reaching disabled people in the community and he hopes to attract gardeners who will be willing to become gardening advisors so that the scheme can be extended.

Horticultural Therapy is also involved with the big gardening event of 1984, the International Garden Festival at Liverpool, from 2 May to 14 October.

On 250 acres of reclaimed dockland, a modern version of the Crystal Palace - the Festival Hall - has been erected, and 30 nations are showing gardens and displays which are characteristic of their culture. Most of them should be accessible.

(If all this daunts you, there is a miniature railway with some adapted carriages that can take you on a 2½ mile sight-seeing tour.)

"Gardening is for Everyone", a joint venture between Horticultural Therapy and Fisons Horticulture Division, has two small gardens, one showing the problems for a disabled person, and the other how to solve them, plus an exhibition called "Gardening in a small space." Disabled and able-bodied staff will be on hand to give advice,

and there will be free, weekly workshops.

The Merseyside Development Corporation, which has organised the festival, also has "Gardens for the Disabled" on which Horticultural Therapy has advised. These are for professional therapists and residential care staff and include a play area, polytunnels, vegetable plots, a top fruit display and raised beds.

In the Homes and Gardens mini-village there is a bungalow designed for the elderly and handicapped. And from 21 July to 29 July an indoor exhibition in the Festival Hall, called "Gardening for All", will include entries of plants and flowers from disabled and elderly contributors. (See below for information.)

The Festival shows a welcome concern for the needs of disabled people, and also how important gardening has become both as a hobby and a therapy.

The Spastics Society has been a pioneer in the field of horticultural therapy.

At Thorngrove Agricultural Centre, Gillingham, Dorset, 28 men and women who are lightly handicapped work with normal tools and a minimum of supervision in the glass-houses, the kitchen garden, the workshop and on the farm.

House plants and bedding-out plants are grown commercially. In 1982-3, over £40,000 worth were sold to factories and offices, through three retail

local authorities, arranges meetings for professional groups and those interested in research and development, and organises open conferences and courses.

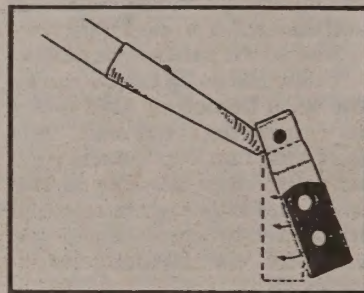
Its publications include research papers, seminar proceedings, a directory, and a bibliography of horticulture and outdoor amenities for the handicapped.

One member of the Federation is Andrew White, who has been Research Gardener at Mary Marlborough Lodge, The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford, for the last twenty years.

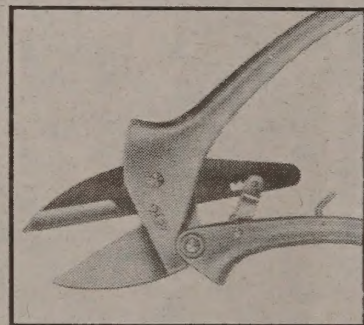
The practical research carried out with patients in the demonstration garden there is unique, and Andrew White is an international authority on tools for physically disabled people.

We are grateful for his help in selecting the tools featured here. They are suitable for people who cannot bend easily, who garden sitting down, who can only use one hand, and do not have a strong grip.

1984 looks like being a good year for the disabled gardener. There's plenty of inspiration and advice around. Now it's up to you!



The oscillating action of the 5 in. Real Hoe cuts weeds and mills the ground too. £9.90 (with handle, £14.50) from Glenside Organics, Glenside Farm, Pleau, Stirlingshire FK7 8DA.



The lightweight 7½ in. "Ratchet" Pruner needs little pressure to cut flower stems or small branches. £9.95 from CeKa Works Ltd, Pwllbeli, Gynedd, North Wales.



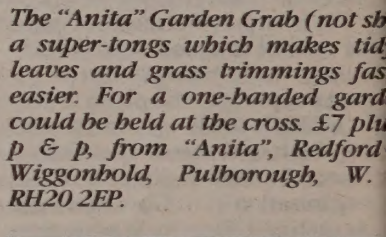
Good looking long-handled tools - the Bulldog Weed Fork (£4.09) and Garden Trowel (£4.09) - from Clarington Forge, Wigan WN1 3DD.



The Baronet Firm Grip Weed Puller, long and operated with one hand. £13.27 plus p & p from A Wright Midland Works, Sidney Street, S1 4RH.



The Multitute combines many jobs in one tool - weeding, leveling, moving stones and tilting. £14.95 from Multitute Garden Tools, Hayne Stowford, Lewdown, Devon EX20 9LW.



The "Anita" Garden Grab (not shown) is a super-tongs which makes tidying leaves and grass trimmings fast and easy. For a one-handed gardener it could be held at the cross. £7 plus p & p, from "Anita", Redford Wiggonhold, Pulborough, W. RH20 2EP.



Easy Wheeler is a light-weight barrow with a walking-stick which gives some support. It could be used by a person in a wheelchair. £21, from Corrie & Co, Frenchmans Road, Hants GU32 3AP.

Many Wolf Tools are suitable for disabled people. For example, the Wolf and Hold Secateurs (not shown) cut flower after it has been cut and used by a one-handed gardener. from stockists, or Wolf Tools Ltd, on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5NE.

Twenty-six athletes from all over the country assembled at Fitzroy Square in London on 11 April. We had been selected to compete in a friendly International between Great Britain, Belgium and West Germany which was being held in Osnabruck, West Germany.

The outward journey went very smoothly. The first stage was from London to Sheerness where we caught the overnight ferry to Vlissingen in Holland.

We arrived at the German border the next afternoon, and then we were travelling on German soil. Almost suddenly, the skyline changed as the towering chimneys of Germany's industrial area, The Ruhr, came into view. It was about 7 o'clock when we finally reached Osnabruck.

Fed but not watered, most of us spent a very enjoyable evening in a bar across the road. The majority of us had our first experience of using our scant knowledge of German to order the beer. Needless to say, we managed!

Friday morning was spent looking around the shops before making our way to the local zoo.

One of the exhibits was an aged chimp who, it seemed, had got fed up with people staring into his cage and had found a unique way of getting his own back.

A team member who was being pushed by one of the care staff stopped in front of the chimp's cage. Without any warning, the chimp had a tantrum, lunged at the wire mesh and spat - with incredible accuracy!

Later, some of us went to see the modern athletics stadium.

Saturday was a warm, sunny day. After an official opening and welcome from the German equivalent of a lord mayor, the competition started.

One of my events, the Class 6 60m run was the first of the meeting - something I did not relish. Still I ran a good race, my time being 10.3 seconds which put me second overall.

Then it was the shot putt event in which I didn't do too well.

In the team football match between England and Germany, we had the edge over the Germans, but there was no score although the match went into extra time.

In the evening there was a

Information

Dolly Robertson, 43 Layham's Road, West Wickham, Kent. Tel: 01-462 4196.

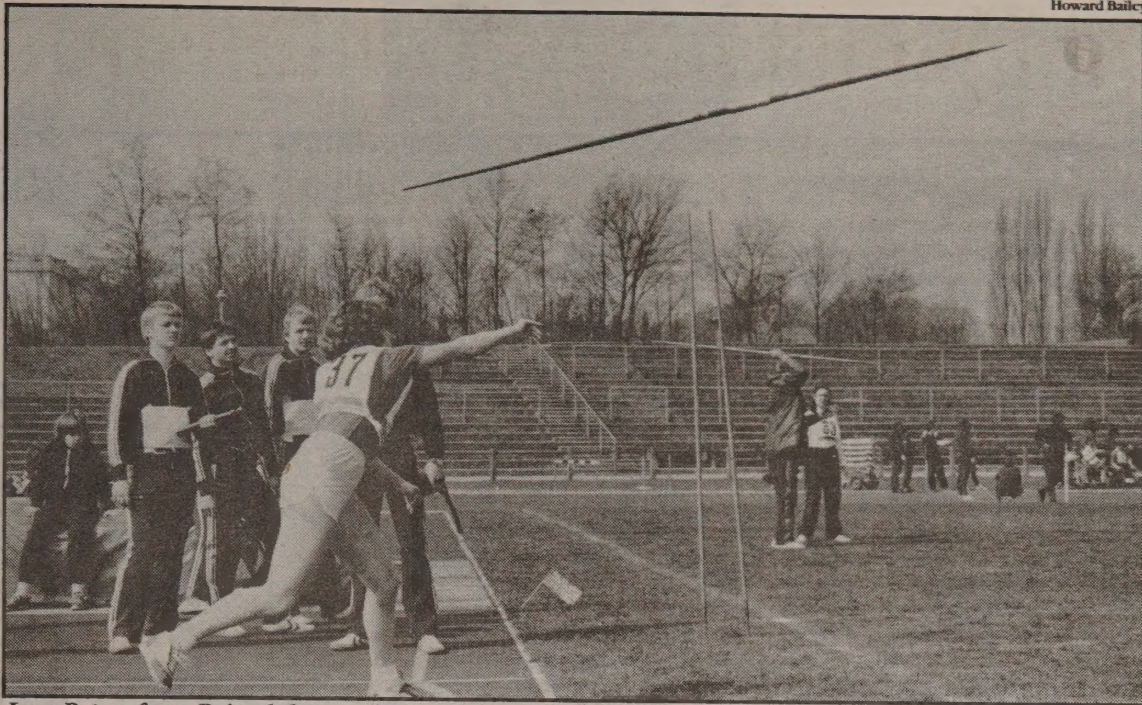
The Society for Horticultural Therapy and Rural Training, Goulds Ground, Vallis Way, Frome, Somerset BA11 3DW. Tel: 0373 64782.

Syon Park Demonstration Garden, The Gardening Centre, Brentford, Middx. Tel: 01-560 0882. Donald Mitchell, Demonstrator and Adviser, is there on Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning. Tools can be tried out.

The Royal Horticultural Society Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU33 6QB. Tel: 0483 224163.

International Garden Festival at Liverpool. For general information about events, entrance tickets, special travel arrangements, special facilities for disabled people and where to stay, contact Paul Billinge, International Garden Festival, Royal Liver Buildings, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1JH. Tel: 051-236 6090. For special tours contact Tourist Information Centre, 29 Lime Street, Liverpool L1 1JG. Tel: 051-227 5234.

To obtain a wheelchair for use at the Festival, contact Mrs Downham, British Red Cross, Red Cross House, Orphan Drive,



Jane Peters from Bristol throws the javelin - and wins her event.

The friendly International



Some of the German and English team get together at Osnabruck. Sunny days and friendly competition brought out the smiles.



Val Smith from Aylesbury was Female Athlete of the competition, a prize awarded for endeavour and sportsmanship.

Newsham Park, Liverpool L6 7UL. Tel: 051-263 4263.

The North West Gas Board is organising a mini-bus service for groups in its region who need help. Contact Jane Ashby, North West Gas, OCC, Litherland Road, Bootle, Merseyside. Tel: 051-922 0011, ext 6265.

Entry forms for the "Gardening is for Everyone" exhibition are available from Schedule Competition Classes, Indoor Show Organiser, Merseyside Development Corporation, Royal Liver Buildings, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1JH. Tel: 051-236 6090.

Thorngrove, The Spastics Society Agricultural Centre, Thorngrove House, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4PR. Tel: 07476 2241.

The Federation to Promote Horticulture for Disabled People. Mrs M. Rhodes, Hon Sec, The Drove, Gillingham, Dorset. Tel: 07476 2369. For publications, see under Reading.

Mary Marlborough Lodge, The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington, Oxford OX3 7LD. Tel: 0865 64811. Courses are organised around the country from time to time.

Gardens for the Disabled Trust, Headcorn Manor, Kent TN27 9NP.

The Advisory Committee for Blind Gardeners organises weekend courses for visually handicapped people and free one-day seminars for profession-



On his first attempt at throwing the bean bag, Steve Varden from Hareward College sets an unofficial world record of 15.5 metres!

als. The next available weekend course is 13-15 July at Writtle Agricultural College, Chelmsford, Essex, and the next seminar at Harlow Car Gardens, near Harrogate. Contact The Southern and Western Regional Association for the Blind, 55 Eton Avenue, Swiss Cottage, London NW3 3ET. Tel: 01-586 8079.

Reading

Kathleen Fleet, *Gardening Without Sight* (1982), Royal National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA. Print version is free for up to 5 copies. The one-volume braille version is 50p a copy for a registered blind person.

Audrey Cloet and Chris Underhill *Gardening is for Everyone*, Souvenir Press, (1982) paper-

back £4.95. Mary Chaplin, *Gardening for the Physically Handicapped and Elderly*, Batsford (1978), paperback £6.50.

N. J. Rowson and P. R. Thoday, *Raised Planters for the Disabled*, The Federation to Promote Horticulture for Disabled People, (1981) £5. For all publications, contact Mrs P. M. Croft, Horticulture Group, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Bath, BA2 7AY.

Leisure and Gardening (1983), from the Equipment for the Disabled series, £3.50 plus 80p p & p, from Mary Marlborough Lodge, address above.

Growth Point, Horticultural Therapy's quarterly magazine, £6 for 4 issues. Contact the Subscription Secretary, address above.

After another visit to a local McDonald's (where else?), we made our way to Vlissingen to board the ferry to Sheerness and then back to London.

I would like to thank everyone for making the trip so enjoyable and successful; also my fellow team members. See you in America!

Chris Channon

The organisers had given everyone 10 DM to spend at a local fair that evening. But the British team decided to use the money to have a slap-up meal at McDonalds - Big Mac's and chips never tasted so good!

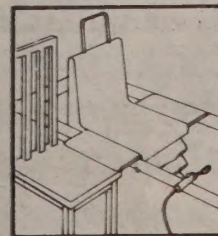
Wednesday morning. Our departure was delayed as one of the team had to visit hospital - taken ill by a mystery illness - and on the trip home three more were taken ill.

After another visit to a local McDonald's (where else?), we made our way to Vlissingen to board the ferry to Sheerness and then back to London.

I would like to thank everyone for making the trip so enjoyable and successful; also my fellow team members. See you in America!

Chris Channon

RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR BATH AT LAST WITH THE MANGAR BATHLIFT

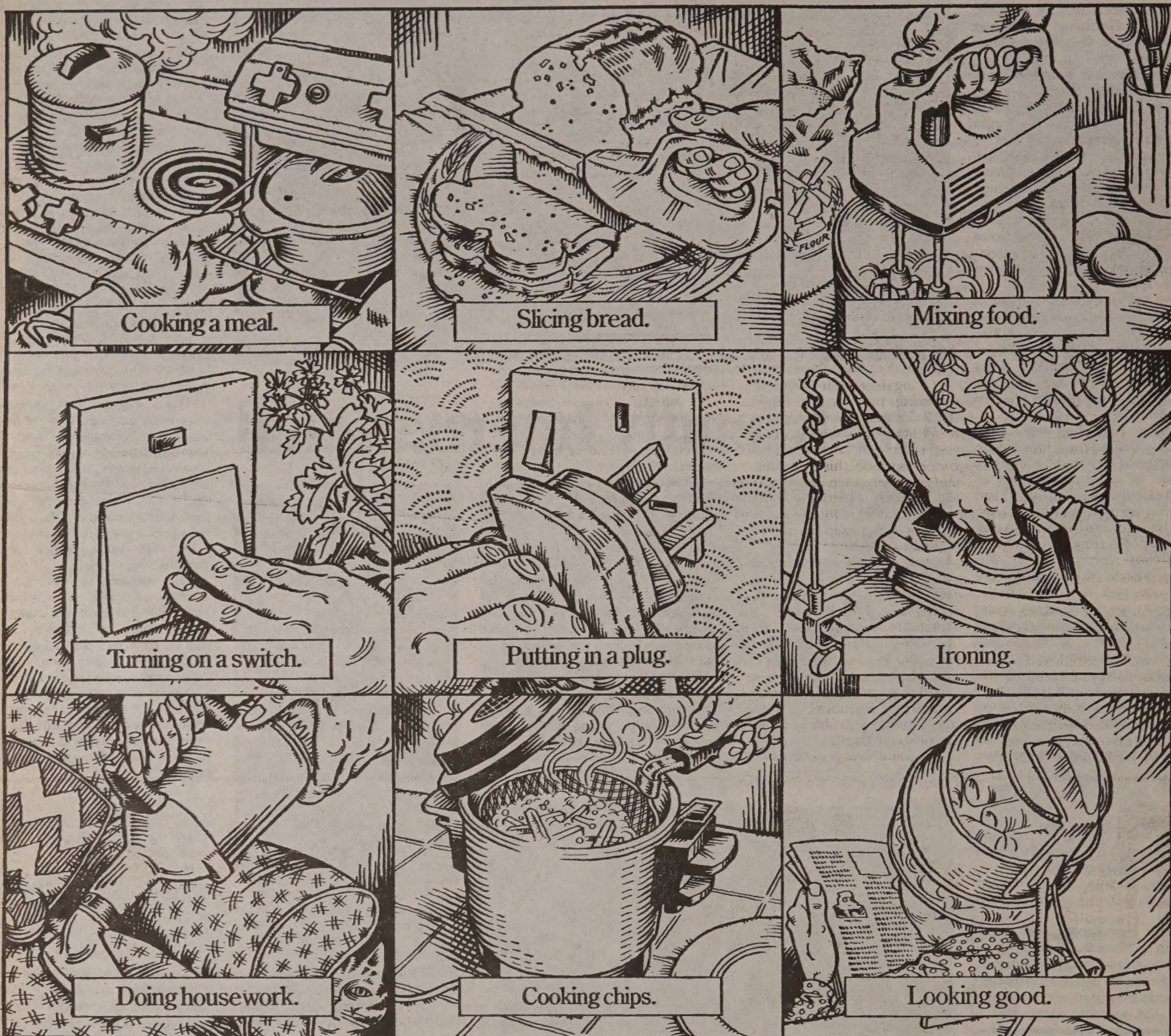


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F. Garman, Sales Dept., MANGAR AIDS LTD., Unit 2, Presteigne Industrial Estate, Presteigne, Powys. Tel: 0544 267674.





Is it this easy in your home?

At your Electricity Board, we have a leaflet called "Making Life Easier for Disabled People".

It contains lots of helpful ideas and lists many electrical appliances which can make life easier.

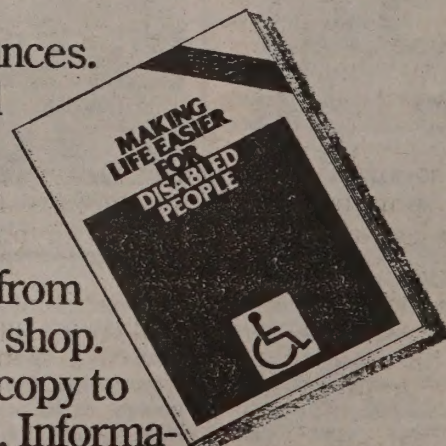
Appliances such as table-top mini cookers. Electric knives which require only a slight pressure to operate. And small, hand-held vacuum cleaners which can be used for dusting, too.

The leaflet also gives details of brailled controls that can be fitted to

certain electrical appliances. And specially designed attachments for plugs and switches which afford easier handling.

The leaflet is free, from your Electricity Board shop. Or you can write for a copy to the Electricity Council, Information Centre, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD.

THINKELECTRIC
The Electricity Council, England and Wales.





Ron is now the proud owner of this Mini Metro 1.3 Automatic. The row of badges on the front of the car are club badges of the 8 motor-ing organisations and motor clubs which Ron belongs to.

Ron stays on wheels

When the DHSS decided to phase out its Blue Invalid Three-Wheelers, Ron Cottrell was faced with a problem. How was he going to get around once his obsolete "trike" finally broke down?

Last year, after hearing of Ron's mobility problem, the Medway and District Spastics Together Group came to his aid. "Ron was referred to us for help. His trike was always breaking down - a car was something he really needed," explained Lee Coles, chairman of the Medway group.

"He was unemployed, and there was no way he could afford the deposit on a car. We saw that for Ron a car was more than a hobby, it was also his livelihood. (He runs a disco and does voluntary work for Radio Medway.)"

Having decided it would help, the group paid for Ron to go to the British School of Motoring's headquarters in Wimbledon for assessment in a conventional car. He passed this assessment, and the group then enrolled him for a course of driving lessons with the BSM. On the second attempt Ron passed his test.

Now he needed a car. The Medway group stepped in again, and paid the deposit on a new Mini Metro 1.3 Automatic, which was bought under the Motability scheme. The group also contributed 1 year's insurance and the cost of the necessary adaptations to the car.

Although the Group has only 9 committed members, it solved Ron's mobility problem with its gift of about £1,800.

Naturally, Ron is delighted.

LOCAL GROUP NEWS



Edited by Theresa Allen

"My hobby is cars. I shall now be able to continue attending motoring and motor sport events. I am a regular marshal/official for several motor clubs," he said.

"I would also like to do the BSM's High Performance Course, but that's a long way off at present."

Meanwhile, Ron has been showing his gratitude to the Medway Group by helping with its fund-raising activities. Last summer he exhibited some of his model cars at Leeds Castle in Kent, and also provided free music at a fund-raising disco.

Ron is also fulfilling his driving ambitions. He has just begun advanced driving lessons, with a view to becoming a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.



Leyton holds the key! Simon Sanders, Appeals Chairman for the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society, presents Leyton Edwards with the keys of a new mini-coach, specially adapted for handicapped children. It will transport them to and from The Society's residential unit, Hill Barton House, and take more of them on outings from the Society's Vranh House School and Treatment Centre, where Leyton is a pupil. £12,000 for the coach was raised in only 14 months from fetes, fayres, donations and bingo sessions held at the school.

OBITUARY

Rhona Cartwright

Mrs Rhona Salisbury Cartwright, home visitor for the Greater Manchester Spastics Society died on 9 March.

Most people knew her as Rhona or Auntie Rhona and will feel the loss as greatly as her family and colleagues.

Given the specific task of home-visiting, Rhona would regularly be seen shaking a "help spastics" tin at a local store or street collection. Many requests for aids and appliances never reached the Director's desk, because Rhona dealt with them from her own pocket.

She was a dedicated Christian who really applied the teaching that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

For over 3 years Rhona bore the knowledge of her terminal cancer. She spent the last year (seven months of which she was in hospital) organising help for Cancer Relief in the University Unit at Withington Hospital. Her effort raised over £500 for this special need.

Her family, friends, colleagues and members of the Greater Manchester Spastics Society Executive Committee, pay tribute to one whose example, generosity and dedication will be irreplaceable.

Reverend O. Lloyd-Roberts,
Director Greater Manchester
Spastics Society

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To: Brian Allman, Devon Conversions Ltd, Vulcan Works, Water Lane, Exeter EX2 8BY.
Tel. (0392) 211611. Telex 42624. Please send me details of the Devon welfare bus range.

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Address _____

Tel. _____



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Please telephone or write for a free colour catalogue to Toys for the Handicapped, 76 Barracks Road, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs. Tel: (02993) 4516,

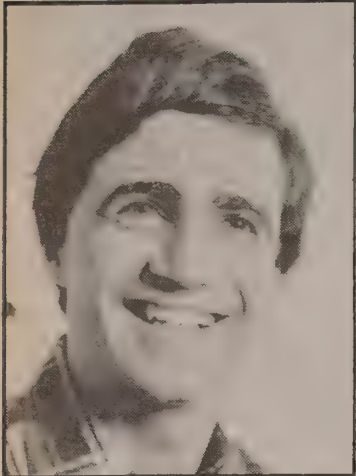


TFH Special Swing Seat, complete with straps and ropes, adjustable for rake and length, £34.50 (+ VAT)

OUTLOOK

Arts

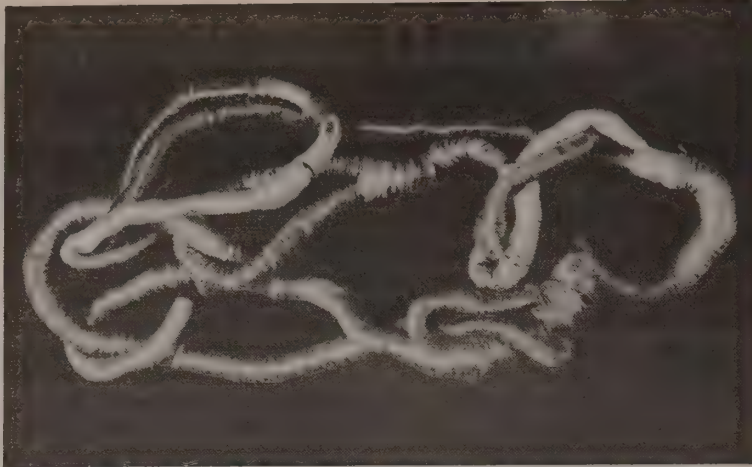
David Braunsberg



David Braunsberg

David Braunsberg's exhibition at London's YMCA last month demonstrated the affinity he has found for weaving and tapestry.

Eschewing representational art and inspired by the colours and textures of nature, he is intrigued by the possibilities for abstraction in textiles. He has recognised that by adapting traditional techniques and departing from the geometric patterns of much modern weaving he can evoke the strains of colour in a



"Circuit", weaving in three dimensions.

sunset, the texture and random shapes found in a tree bark, or even the stippling of a painted surface.

Although autistic, David, 25, received an integrated education. While he was at college studying Furnishing Design and Textiles, he attracted the attention of Anne Sutton and other well known weavers. He has since developed his distinctive style through working with weavers both in England and America.

The sweeps and curves, the changing colours and textures that are so characteristic of his work are made possible through the use of a vertical loom and a subtle incorporation of unusual threads and fabrics.

There are, for example, hints of gold lurex shimmering through the waters of "Sea of

Galilee", and tufts of matted fibre hanging over "In the forest" evoke the steaming opulence of an equatorial jungle.

David's work is on permanent display at Goldsmith's Craft Gallery. His next exhibition will be at Burgh House in London in November.

He is hoping that he will be included in the British Craft's Centre's summer exhibition and that some new commissions and sales will arise from this.

These shows will provide an opportunity for the public to see some of David's most recent experimental pieces which explore the possibilities of three dimensional textile sculptures where thick, colourfully bound threads are knotted and twined to probe imagination.

Gill Parker
Information Officer

Motoring

The Escort Chairman:

70 m.p.g.

+ no tax

= a good deal

Severely disabled people experience many problems as they are lifted, pushed and pulled into a conventional car seat.

We have seen the Talbot Ranch, the Metro Chairman and several van conversions which will take a seated wheelchair passenger, but the latest of this type, the new Ford-based vehicle from Gowrings Mobility International, seems to me one of the best.

The Escort Chairman is based on the very popular Ford Escort van. I hope this will not put anybody off because the modern van is as comfortable and well equipped as the saloon car, with the added advantage that it is designed to give long reliable service.

To convert the van (35 or 55 model) into the Chairman, windows have been fitted to the sides, and a low extended roof with windows has been added. The rear suspension has been lowered to enable easy access through the rear doors up a shallow ramp.

The effect of all this is a clean-looking estate car unlike their previous ice-cream van vehicles.

Inside, the conversion meets the usual high standard of this company. A cover for the spare wheel and a seat for the attendant in the back come as basic equipment.

On the road there is absolutely no difference between driving

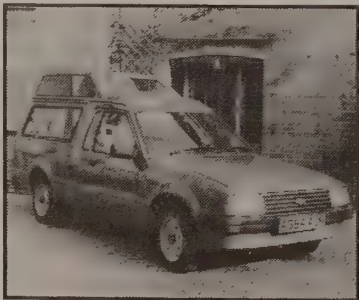


The lowered rear suspension and shallow ramp make the Chairman easily accessible for someone in a wheelchair.

this vehicle and the standard Ford Escort car.

The Escort Chairman is available across the whole Escort range of vans, from the simplest 1.1 Popular 35 Van to the new 1.6 Diesel 55 Van. My personal recommendation is the 1.6 Diesel 35 Van, which, if other correspondents are to be believed, gives over 70 m.p.g!

As a permanently converted vehicle, the Escort Chairman is



No way can this be mistaken for an ice-cream van!

exempt from car tax, VAT, and a road fund license, so as a vehicle for a family with a disabled child it could be a very economical answer to an old problem once the initial purchase price of nearly £8,000 is recovered.

As an engineer, I cannot gauge what riding in the back is like, so

we asked Merle Davies, The Society's Holiday Officer, to report.

John Byworth

What does the passenger think?

Entry to the Escort Chairman is very easy via a shallow aluminium ramp. Once inside, the wheelchair is secured by a simple locking system. There are plans to fit long inertia reel seat belts which can be attached to the wheelchair before entry, retracting as the chair reaches the correct position in the car. They would avoid someone from the front of the car having to lean over to secure the chair.

The wheelchair passenger has a smooth ride, but siteseeing could be obscured as the head of an average height adult is in line with the metal panel which joins the side window to the extended roof.

At the same time, this does provide some privacy, and there is not the feeling of being in a goldfish bowl.

The Escort Chairman is a family car, enabling a disabled person to travel in his or her wheelchair with ease and comfort and with the companionship of fellow passengers.

Merle Davies.

Books

Daily Living with a Handicapped Child

by Diana M. Millard
(Croom Helm, Special Education Series, £8.95 paperback)

As a mother of two handicapped boys aged 18 and 9, I know how useful this book would have been when my first son was young and I faced what seemed insurmountable problems. All I needed was re-assuring.

The book is a must for parents with a handicapped child. It is sensitively written and easy to understand, and points out simple, but extremely helpful ideas.

It covers every aspect of childhood: feeding, sleeping, clothing, going out. It also gives advice on useful equipment.

I especially liked the chapter dealing with the stress a handicapped child can place on the parents' relationship. The author explains how stress can develop and how it can be relieved. Having been through most of these problems myself, I know how desperate you can sometimes feel and how inevitable it is that you will take this emotion out on your nearest and dearest.

My one criticism is that more attention should have been given to warning parents of the problems they will face in finding appropriate education for their handicapped child. It would have been nice to have an address where parents could obtain a register listing all types of educational provision across the country.

Nevertheless, this is a valuable reference book.

Doreen Kingham

The Wheelchair Child

by Phillipa Russell
(Souvenir Press, paperback, £6.95)

This book is written "with a view to helping and informing parents and professionals about the problems, possible pleasures and potential of a wheelchair life."

The *Wheelchair Child* is indeed a comprehensive guide from birth to adulthood, from the dilemmas of the new parent to the adolescent's view of living with a disability. It gives hope

and a feeling of satisfaction that there are people and organisations equipped and ready to help.

The book covers initial and supportive hospital help, educational facilities including opportunity playgroups, and problems of day-to-day management. There is much helpful, practical advice on organisations, activities, equipment and reading matter.

In each chapter the author makes comments which one feels are from personal experience and give authenticity to the book.

Once most of the problems are alleviated, possible pleasures may emerge as the wheelchair child makes the most of his life in spite of his handicap. This potential must give hope to all parents: the opportunities are being offered and accepted.

The cost of management and the relief agencies are reported positively, dispelling the feeling that allowances are charity and only for others.

The updated information on special education and new benefits is a tribute to parents and organisations whose pressure on public opinion and government agencies over many years has resulted in the disabled being considered as children first and handicapped second.

The chapter which includes speech and communication was less helpful. With the advent of microtechnology, new equipment is now available to help in this important area of child development.

The message of this readable book is that although the lot of the wheelchair child has improved, the parent must keep pressing for further improvements.

The book is a must for professionals and parents.

Celia Laundon
Ingfield Manor School

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OUTLOOK

Films

For them and not for me?

The Spastics Society has provided some of the money for a new video about sex and physically handicapped people made by Brook Advisory Centres.

Through conversation with four young adults from different backgrounds and with varying degrees of congenital or acquired handicap, the video confronts the issue of sex education and its availability among young people with disabilities.

The film is 85 minutes long but can be divided into four independent sections. It is designed to trigger discussion and re-evaluation of attitudes by parents, health professionals and social workers.

Each of the four conversations reveals the crucial importance of realising that the education and rehabilitation of disabled people should focus on each person's adaptation to society rather than to disability.

Maureen, who is soon to move in with her boyfriend, received one lesson on the biology of sex. As she says, "I think I could have been told, 'Well, this could happen to you'".

Her mother thought Maureen would "be happy just staying with her".

It is only after the development of a serious relationship that Maureen can say, "I feel most things I can cope with now, I know I can... it's marvellous."

Jim stresses that the issue of sex education is especially important to disabled young people.

"The assumption for normal sex education is that they will go and do it anyway so let's teach them how to do it at minimum risk.

"This attitude will differ somewhat when teaching handicapped adolescents, because the opportunities are not there in the beginning... opportunities to gain information... to go to night clubs and to cinemas, and all the normal access points that adolescents have. They're learning for themselves about not only the sex act, but how to relate to the opposite sex as well.

"I would like to ask people how do you want to be loved... as a human being with dignity and respect, or do you want to be loved as a lap dog or inferior being?"

Gill Parker

The film is available for sale or hire from Brook Advisory Centres, Education and Publications Unit, 10 Albert Street, Birmingham B4 7UD. Tel: 021-643 1554.

Young Outlook

Competition!

Have you entered Pierre's Poetry Competition yet? The closing date is 10 July, and there are prizes to be won.

Your poems should be on the theme of clowns, and typed or carefully handwritten, with name, age, address and school clearly marked on the back.

Send your poem to Pierre's Poetry Competition, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

VIEWPOINT

Have you been emotionally hurt?

Chris Davies suggests a way for people to help each other

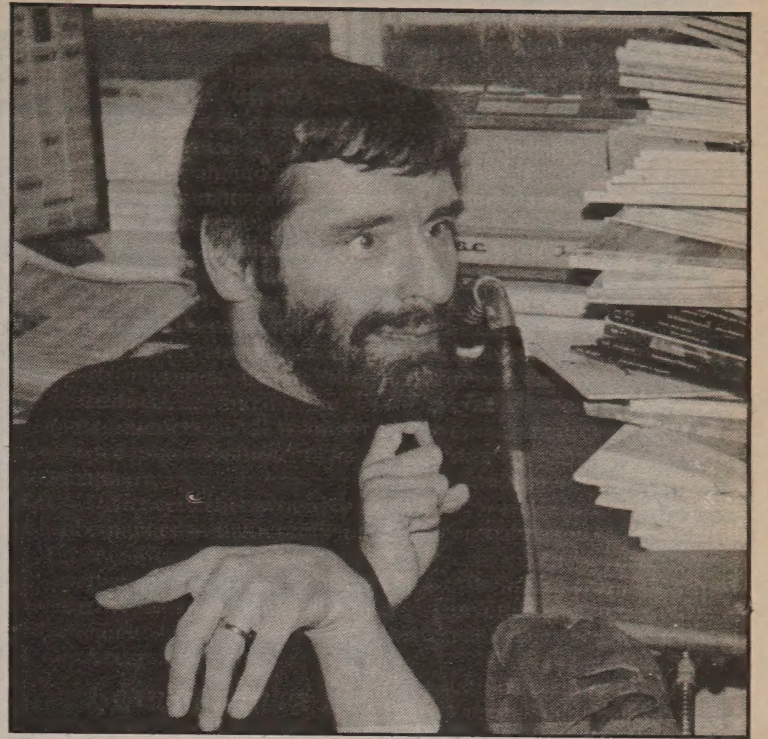
Everyone must have some knowledge of what it is like when an intense personal relationship comes to an end - the sense of void, of complete emptiness which occurs after periods of ecstatic happiness.

Disabled people are not immune from this trauma.

While it would be foolish for us to assume that each time a relationship ends, and the despair begins, it is entirely due to our disability, it would be naive to assume that this plays no part in our judgement of relationships and our reaction to the aftermath.

We tend to value relationships more highly than able-bodied people because of the scarcity value. No matter what kind of partner we seek, disabled or not, it is foolish to deny that for most people (including disabled people) physical handicap is a deterrent. So on those occasions when the disability does not prevent a sustained, intense and intimate relationship, we grab it.

When the relationship ends, the gloom is more intense. Thinking, "Will it ever happen again?" intensifies the desperate loneliness. It may not last for



Chris Davies

long, but while it's there, my God, it hurts!

Having recently come through such a period, I happened to meet two old school friends who told me their experiences since our collective adolescence. Unlike myself, they have both been married. Their marriages ended unsuccessfully.

In sharing one another's experiences, we realised how much common ground existed. More importantly, we were able to soothe each other's emotional wounds more easily because we knew all too well the feelings being expressed. Nobody understands better than someone who has first-hand experience.

All this gave me food for thought. How many others are

there like us who have no emotional outlets for their festering wounds?

Wouldn't they also benefit from sharing their experiences with people like themselves?

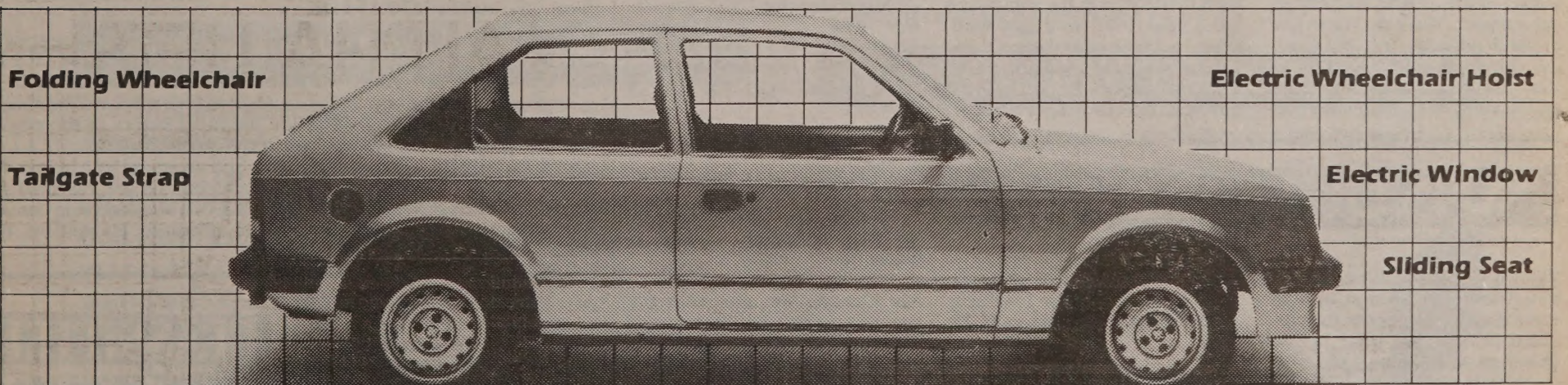
What I think is needed is a self-help forum - not a dating organisation or an advice agency. Do you agree? If so, let me know.

I'm not pretending that the sharing process can cure the wounds, but it could ease them.

We cannot - and should not - be protected from this hurt, and surely we are the best people to help alleviate it.

If you support the idea of a self-help forum, write to Chris Davies, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

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Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

Why no sex education?

"We have two children. John is 14 and Sarah is 12. Sarah has cerebral palsy and she goes to a local special school.

Recently I asked Sarah's teacher what arrangements the school made for giving sex education and I was very surprised to learn that this subject was not in the curriculum. Sarah's teacher said that the head teacher and other staff considered it best to answer any questions that children asked on a personal basis.

Knowing Sarah - and I am sure that there are many children like her - she is most unlikely to ask any questions herself and though I will do what I can to give her home instruction I do feel that the school should take some responsibility. Our son is receiving good sex instruction in his comprehensive school.

Are my husband and I out of line in wanting the same kind of education for his sister?"

No, you are certainly not out of line in expecting up-to-date and competent teaching about sexual and personal relationships for Sarah. In fact, children with disabilities may well need more information and opportunities for straight forward discussion than able-bodied children.

Sadly, however, even in 1984 Sarah's special school is not unusual in this respect. In spite of many discussions with teachers over the years some head teachers of special schools still prefer to deal with questions on a personal basis and so this very important topic does not appear on more than a few timetables.

A number of organisations, including SPOD, the Association to aid the Sexual and Personal Relationships of Disabled People, have been campaigning about this issue for some time. Dr Mary Davies, SPOD's Education and Training Officer, has prepared a new guide for parents and teachers on sex education for children with physical handicaps and this will be available in the summer. You may like to get in touch with SPOD at 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ, as they have a range of literature and reading lists which both you

and the staff at Sarah's school may well find helpful.

A very clear and explicit booklet, which was reviewed in the August 1983 issue of *Spastics News*, may also be of interest to Sarah when she is a little older. *Sex for Young People with Spina Bifida or Cerebral Palsy*, price £1.25, can be obtained from The Spastics Society's bookshop at 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

I want to work for The Society

"My reason for writing to you is that I graduate from University in May 1984 and obviously my thoughts are turning towards my future career. During my final year I have attended a local special school on a weekly basis as a voluntary helper. I have worked with the same class of children since October 1983 and have, therefore, been able to build up a close relationship with both the children and staff. I have thoroughly enjoyed this valuable experience and it has confirmed my desire to work in a social work setting with particular reference to disability.

I am very interested in working with The Spastics Society, possibly as a "house-parent" in one of The Society's residential schools and I have seen one or two advertisements in the national newspapers. I would also be interested in making a general enquiry to The Society regarding any other vacancies for which my qualifications might be suitable. However, I am not sure whom I should contact in the first instance. Would you be able to point me in the right direction?

I am so glad that your voluntary work in the local special school was such a valuable and enjoyable experience and it is good to know that you are actively considering a career with people with disabilities in the social services field. I am sure that with your background and special interests you will have a great deal to offer, especially when you have gained more experience.



Nigel Tuckett

Although I imagine that you are hoping to have put the academic life behind you, at least for a few years, you will probably need to consider taking a professional qualification at a later stage. I suggest that you should get in touch with the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, asking for relevant leaflets which will give you details of the various courses available and the ways in which you can gain experience in this field. There are two main qualifications, the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and the Certificate in Social Service (CSS). The course leading to the CQSW is usually full time and for the CSS you take a different course which combines learning at work, private study and part time attendance at college.

It sounds a very good idea to gain some practical experience in a residential school. Most of the schools and centres run by The Spastics Society recruit their own junior staff but you may also like to write to the Senior Personnel Officer, Social Services Division, 16 Fitzroy Square, who will be able to advise you about future vacancies and how best to apply.

I am also giving you the addresses of several other voluntary organisations which employ staff to work with children and adolescents with disabilities.

Good luck with your applications!

Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, Derbyshire House, St. Chad's Street, London WC1H 8AD. Tel: 01-278 2455.

Dr. Barnardo's, Tanner's Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex. Tel: 01-550 8822.

Shaftesbury Society, 112 Regency Street, London SW1. Tel: 01-834 7444.

The Children's Society, Old Town Hall, Kennington Road, London SE11 4QD. Tel: 01-735 2441.

Association should contact Brian Locke, Hertfordshire School of Tennis, 9 New Road, Weston Turville, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

Air Canada has introduced a special fare that provides attendants of disabled passengers a 50 per cent discount for travel on all the airline's routes within Canada. The fare is not valid across the Atlantic. A medical certificate and questionnaire must be completed and clearance obtained from one of Air Canada's UK reservation offices prior to booking. Contact Air Canada, 140 Regent Street, London W1. Tel: 01-439 7941

The Swindon Aids Centre provides a permanent display of aids and equipment for disabled people. It also has an information service on benefits, facilities and services, and illustrated literature on aids not on display. The

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory College

Personal Considerations for Cerebral Palsied Woman is a course looking at physical problems, psychological factors and physiological changes related to body image, sexuality and childlessness. For all those involved in care, education or counselling. 29 May-1 June. Tuition £48, residence £54.

A course for Instructors of Mentally Handicapped Adults is designed to familiarise instructors with current ideas and practice in adult training centres and similar settings. 1-3 June. Tuition £36, residence £36.

Team Building and Team Teaching Concerning Children with Special Needs is a course for staff of any discipline from special or ordinary schools who are working towards mutually supportive programmes. 6-8 June. Tuition £36, residence £36

Stress Factors Inhibiting Movement and Education is a programme to discuss an approach to working with children with cerebral dysfunction including the cerebral palsied, epileptic and intellectually impaired. Areas of work to be included will be hearing, vision and touch in relation to performance, and difficulties experienced in sensory co-ordination. 1-3 July. Tuition £40, resident £36.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551.

Conferences and leisure

Open Sports Day for Disabled People. The Thistle Foundation, Edinburgh is holding a "come and try" open sports day for disabled people over the age of 14. The event will be held on 26 May from 10 a.m. onwards. There will be demonstrations by skilled disabled sportsmen and women and the opportunity to try new sports including basketball, archery, fencing, unihoc, and others. No charge will be made. Further information from Alan Humphries, The Thistle Foundation, 27A Walker Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HX. Tel: 031-225 7282.

Special Aids for Special People is a day course covering a broad range of technical aids, equipment and techniques developed for physically and multiply disabled people. The course will be practical and there will be an opportunity to try out some of the equipment. It will take place on 9 June at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge. Fees for the day are £9 for professionals, £8 for voluntary workers, students and disabled people, £7 for ACTIVE members. All enquiries to Norman Sturgeon, 61 Willow Lea, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 3RE.

The Children's Legal Centre and The Spastics Society are holding another in the series of training days for all those concerned with the operation of the 1981 Education Act. The training day will take place on 10 July at Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, London SW1. The conference fee is £7 and includes conference pack, lunch, coffee and tea. For bookings or more information contact the centre for Studies on Integration in Education, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

Horticultural Therapy is holding another practical study day for staff involved in gardening with disabled people. The study day will take place on 11 July and will be on instructing mentally handicapped people. Fee for the day is £20. Contact the course organiser, Horticultural Therapy Training Centre, Warwickshire College of Agriculture, Moreton Morrell, Warwickshire. Tel: 0926-651288.

Sharing: Relationships and Mutual Support is the title of the Eleventh Annual Congress of APMH - Association of Professions for the Mentally Handicapped. The Congress will take place on 25-28 July at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham. For application forms and enquiries contact Congress Organiser, APMH Congress, C/Springwood Centre, Ransom Drive, Mapperley, Nottingham. All applications must be in by 15 June.

The Mid-Hants Railway Watercress Line will be holding special days for disabled people on 24 June and 30 September. Normal train services will be operating, but additional staff will be available to assist parties, and it is hoped that an adapted fork truck will be able to raise disabled people to look inside the locomotives in the engine shed. All disabled passengers will travel at the half fare of £1.10 return. Each disabled person should be accompanied by a helper, for whom discount fares are available. Reservations are essential for wheelchair accommodation on the trains. For a booking form contact the Marketing Officer, Alresford Station, Alresford, Hampshire. Tel: 0962-73 3810.

Centre is open Monday to Friday. Would all visitors please telephone to make an appointment with the occupational therapist. The Swindon Aids Centre, The Hawthorn Centre, Cricklade Road, Swindon. Tel: 0793 43966.

Setting up for Self-Help is a practical guide to setting up mutual support and self-help groups for families with handicapped children. It is put out by Contact a Family in association with The Mental Health Foundation. The guide is available from Contact a Family, 16 Strutton Ground, Victoria, London SW1P. Tel: 01-222 2695/3969. £2 including post and packing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thomas Cook is announcing a new travel competition to help employment prospects for disabled people. The prize is free travel to and from a place of learning/business in Europe, plus two weeks full board and accommodation at a Thomas Cook recommended hotel in October 1984. The trip is to enable a disabled person to study and report on present and future job opportunities open to disabled people. The competition is open to all disabled people. To enter write no more than 500 typed words about your achievements, the location of your proposed visit, and how it will help create jobs and improve prospects for other disabled people. Entries must be received by 31 July and should be sent to Tho-

mas Cook Travel Competition, Opportunities for the Disabled, 1 Princess Street, London EC2R 8EU.

Down's Children's Association has just launched a quarterly review, *Assessment*, which reviews schooling under the 1981 Education Act. The publication concentrates on case histories of handicapped children being placed in ordinary or special schools, how parents are coping with the new procedures, and how professionals are responding. For more information contact Alan Macdonald, on 01-764 2008 or 01-580 0511.

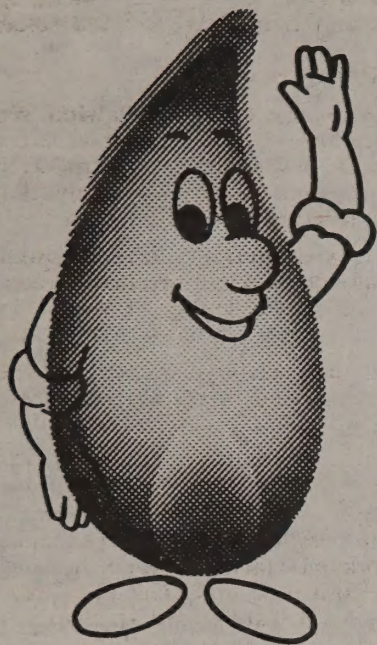
Tennis in a Wheelchair. Anyone interested in the establishment of a Wheelchair Tennis

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PENFRIEND WANTED, preferably a young woman, for 24-year-old cp man who enjoys sports, TV, swimming, listening to music and going to discos. He also likes animals. Write to Christopher Elliot, Scotsraig, 18 Park Road, Paisley, Scotland.



"HELP FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED."

The gas people offer a wide range of help to those who need it most, particularly the elderly and disabled.

If you are elderly or disabled, here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you. If you know somebody who might benefit from these services, please pass the information to them.

FREE GAS SAFETY CHECKS

A free gas safety check on your gas appliances and installations is available if: *You are 65 or over and you live alone; You are a registered handicapped person of any age and you live alone.*

This free check includes any necessary adjustments as well as materials up to the cost of £2.50 (including VAT). You might have to pay for any additional work that needs to be done.

SERVICING AND LEAKS

Gas fires, water heaters and central heating systems all need servicing from time to time. All customers can be assured that their appliances are operating safely and efficiently if they have them serviced regularly by competent people.

You should also bear in mind that checking and making safe a suspected escape, and simple gas escape repairs will usually be free. Why? Because we do not charge for the first 30 minutes of work, nor will we charge for parts and materials up to the value of £1 installed during that initial visit. If you suspect a gas leak at home or in the street, report it at once. The phone is quickest — call the emergency number for your area, under "GAS" in the local telephone directory.

AIDS FOR THE DISABLED

Modern gas appliances are much easier for disabled people to use. Gas built-in ovens and hot-plates can be placed at a convenient height in the kitchen for people in wheelchairs or for people who find it difficult to bend down or reach up when they are cooking. Most new cookers and fires now have automatic spark ignition and need no matches to light them.

If you have a hand disability, you might find the controls on your cooker or gas fire difficult to operate.

British Gas has devised a range of special adaptors which should make life easier. There are four types of tap handles specially designed for cookers, each of which will fit many different models, and tap adaptors for many gas fires.

There is a nominal standard charge of £2 (plus VAT) per appliance for supplying and fitting adaptors to a new or existing appliance.

If you know someone who is blind or has failing sight, please tell them about braille controls for cookers and central heating. The clock controls which switch central heating on and off can be brailled. Special braille or studded oven thermostat dials are available for most gas cookers, together with braille cooking charts.

ASK US TO HELP YOU

British Gas has a team of Home Service Advisers, who will call on disabled people at home and provide free advice on the use of gas. They can provide information about special adaptors and handles and advise on the choice of suitable appliances.

If you would like to contact the Home Service Advisers or to enquire about free gas safety checks, regular servicing for appliances or aids for the disabled, visit your local gas showroom or telephone the gas service centre (the phone number is under "GAS" in the local directory).

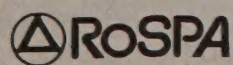
PAYING FOR GAS

The showroom can also tell you about easier ways to pay your gas bills, and how to get help if there is real hardship — ask for the Code of Practice, "Electricity and gas bills for your home."

BRITISH GAS



HELPFUEL SERVICES FROM THE GAS PEOPLE.



British Gas supports RoSPA and Age Concern in its 'Home Safety in Retirement' Campaign.

AGE CONCERN

A unique way to find volunteers

A new project bringing together voluntary organisations needing help, and willing disabled and able-bodied volunteers, has started in Cardiff on CBC, the city's independent local radio station.

Organisations looking for volunteers can explain their work and their need for help on a regular afternoon interview spot. Volunteers coming forward are then put in contact with the appropriate organisation.

The Contact Project has a full-time co-ordinator, Jon Calvin-Thomas.

"We have great hopes for the new project, which, as far as we know, is the only one of its kind in Britain," he said.

"As well as running the volunteering project, we are hoping to increase public awareness about the special needs of disabled people and their families."

The new volunteer scheme is funded by the Manpower Services Commission and sponsored by Wales Council for the Disabled. Initially, it will run for one year.

Already, in the two months the scheme has been operating, many volunteers have come forward.

"We have had about two interviews a week so far, and each one has attracted volunteers," explained Jon Calvin-Thomas.

"We use the term 'volunteers' in its widest sense. Once we interviewed an agrophobic, and we had calls from 10 others who

wanted to get a self-help group started.

"We have also got people involved in the Jubilee Sailing Trust, and two people have been placed working with mentally handicapped people in Cardiff.

"The first three volunteers to come forward got involved working with a local PHAB club, (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied). At first, they were helping out in a youth-club situation, but now they are trying to get sponsorship from local companies for day outings. Quite a significant thing has developed," he said.

Jon Calvin-Thomas is hoping that the MSC will continue funding the volunteer scheme after its first year.

That will depend on how many volunteers are placed through it. The MSC obviously wants to feel that the Contact Scheme is not only providing help to organisations dealing with disability, but offering involvement and fulfilment to unemployed people, whether physically disabled or able-bodied.

In addition to the volunteer spots, CBC also broadcasts a weekly programme of news, views, information and advice for disabled people after 6 p.m. news every Monday.

The Contact programme has been on the air since July 1980, and has always been presented by volunteers. Now Jon Calvin-Thomas is producing it, and is hoping to get more disabled people involved in the production.

Don't wait to claim your SDA

In November this year the Government plans to introduce a new Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA). This will replace Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension (NCIP) and the housewives' pension equivalent (HNCIP).

In future all claimants, male or female, single or married, will in theory have to pass two tests for eligibility. You must be incapable of work and you will have to have a medical assessment which shows you have an 80 per cent "loss of faculty."

The loss of faculty test is based on the Industrial Injuries Scale which The Society believes is unsuitable for the multiple handicaps created by cerebral palsy.

Measures announced by the Government in March are designed to make it easier for some people to qualify for SDA.

●If, by November, you are already receiving HNCIP then you will automatically be transferred to SDA.

●If you are incapable of work and under 20, you will be entitled to SDA without having to prove an 80 per cent loss of faculty.

●If you are incapable of work and fall within one of five categories, it will be assumed that you have an 80 per cent loss of faculty so that you will need no further medical assessment. The categories are: receiving Mobility Allowance, receiving Attendance Allowance, receiving War Pensioner Mobility Supplement, being registered as blind or partially sighted, already assessed at 80 per cent for Industrial Injuries or War Pension.

The DHSS will be writing to people who appear eligible for H/NCIP advising them to claim now, but it will take a long time to identify everyone and people may be left out.

"Don't wait until November; claim H/NCIP now," advises The Society's Lobbying Department. "Either contact your social security office for claim forms or ask your local citizens advice bureau for help."

If you would like to receive a free copy of the newspaper regularly, please send your name, address and occupation to the Circulation Supervisor, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Disability Now

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He's doing it for The Society. Fritz Macaulay, right, is training bard for this month's 26-mile London Marathon. He will be running to raise money for the Friends of the Douglas Arter Centre, where his wife, Hilary, is assistant manager. With Fritz is John Gee, a resident at the Centre.

John's office gets a new look

John Cox's office has had a face-lift. His sofa and armchair have been re-upholstered by Mabel Cross, a workshop instructor at Wakes Hall Centre.

John had taken an instant dislike to the white fabric the furniture was originally covered in. "It looked like a dentist's chair," he said.

After John Lewis' had put in a rather steep quotation for doing the upholstery, Sheila Rawstone, Administrator of the Stars Organisation for Spastics, suggested Mabel Cross might be able to help.

Mrs Cross, who is 76, has been employed at the Centre for 19 years. She specialises in needlework, but does upholstery as well.

"I have upholstered all the chairs here at Wakes Hall," she said.

John was surprised when on a visit to Wakes Hall he saw the sofa and chair in the workshop. Now that they are back in his office, his verdict is "fantastic."

United States

Continued from page 7

Employment of the handicapped, agrees.

"We need a national policy for employment of the handicapped, and we need the concept of accommodation more clearly established," he said.

"There are also too many disabled people being prepared for inappropriate jobs without futures: blind people being trained to work in dark rooms, when most developing is now done automatically, and deaf people trained to work with noisy Linotype machines which are being phased out."

Nevertheless, he sees attitudes changing, not least among the disabled.

"At last disabled people have stopped feeling ashamed of their disabilities. This changed perception of themselves is an important factor in getting jobs. It is also reflected in the way they have organised themselves into disability consumer groups and learned how to use the lobbying process successfully."



On the up and up. Gwen Rose, (left), circulation supervisor for Disability Now, has recently taken possession of an Apple IIe computer to help with her work. The newspaper's circulation is on the rise and currently stands at 18,000. "The computer makes it quicker and easier to add new names to the list," Gwen said. It also prints labels and can extract sections from the mailing list. With Gwen is Helen McNelly, training officer at Neath Hill Professional Workshop, who set up the data base and trained Gwen to use the Apple.



What's Wrong? Toni McCarthy, leader of the Electrical Section at Abbots Langley Works, receives a shield on behalf of her section from Works Manager, Joe Valerio. The shield was the fiercely contested prize in a hazard spotting competition recently held at the works. Employees identified work hazards on a poster designed for the purpose by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The Electrical Section won first prize by spotting 35 of 50 potential hazards.

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Enjoy a relaxing bath in your own home with the help of an Autolift. The sturdy moulded chair lifts over the bath edge and right down into the water with the minimum of effort. A locking device is available to facilitate entry from a wheelchair and the Autolift can be either self or assistant operated.

CONTACT MECANAIDS FOR A FREE DEMONSTRATION OF THE AUTOLIFT IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HOME.

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